Hafa Adai!

# Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XVIII, Issue No. 53 | FRIDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2008 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

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**OPINION METER**

This week's poll:
**Is the CNMI government doing enough to pursue corruption cases and other white-collar crimes on the islands?**

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

## INSIDE

**6th Anniversary**
Tony Roma's and Capricciosa is celebrating its fourth year in Garapan this month.

LOCAL...Page 6

**Little Hero**
To many people, the soft-spoken 7-year-old Alexis Goggins is a hero.

NATION...Page 24

**Oral Piercings**
Piercing is just one of today's popular forms of "body art" and self-expression. But is it safe?

LIFE & STYLE...Page 28

LOCAL SENATORS TO U.S. SENATE

# 'Delay action on federalization bill'

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Local senators approved a resolution yesterday calling on the U.S. Senate to postpone action on the CNMI immigration bill until a potential impact study is completed.

> If H.R. 3079 is not scrutinized carefully and amended to address all major stakeholders' concerns, including that of the Commonwealth government, community and local businesses, utter disaster will surely befall the Commonwealth.

The resolution also requests the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to grant local officials additional opportunity to work with the committee on outstanding concerns about the bill.

House bill 3079, the bill that would impose federal immigration policy on the Commonwealth, is awaiting action in the U.S. Senate.

According to the local lawmakers, the proposed federal immigration system would have "far less flexibility to support the Commonwealth's continuing need

See DELAY on Page 4

RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN

**NMC FORUM**
Northern Marianas College Dr. Carmen Fernandez speaks with students, parents, and community members to discuss and answer questions about the college's accreditation progress. ***See related story on Page 4.***

# Officials scramble to help fix NMC

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

Rep. David Apatang has introduced a bill setting aside $3 million that would be used for the imme-

See OFFICIALS on Page 4

**RELATED NEWS**
- Pete A. suggest federal funds for NMC. PAGE 3
- Accreditation issues highlight NMC forum. PAGE 4

# Labor's duty to prefer local workers affirmed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas yesterday said Labor has a continuing obligation to prioritize U.S. citizens and residents in employment opportunities.

San Nicolas underscored the importance of giving preference to local workers in his decision affirming the Labor Administrative Hearing Office's order that

See LABOR'S on Page 4

# Strokes among middle-aged women triple

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE
AP MEDICAL WRITER

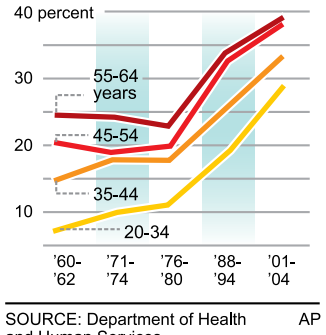
**NEW ORLEANS** (AP)— Strokes have tripled in recent years among middle-aged women in the U.S., an alarming trend doctors blame on the obesity epidemic. Nearly 2 percent of women ages 35 to 54 reported suffering a stroke in the most recent federal health survey, from 1999 to 2004. Only about half a percent did in the previous survey, from 1988 to 1994.

See STROKES on Page 4

**ON THE NET**
Stroke conference: http://www.strokeassociation.org
Body Mass Index calculator: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/adult-BMI/english-bmi-calculator/bmi-calculator.htm

**Alarming trend**
The number of obese women has increased since the 1960s.

**Obese women in the U.S.**
By percentage of age range shown




SOURCE: Department of Health and Human Services — AP

NMC prevails in Angello's termination lawsuit. PAGE 2
Bridge Investment to open Tinian HQ next week. PAGE 3

Local

# NMC prevails in Angello's termination lawsuit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College has prevailed in the lawsuit filed by Jack Angello over his alleged unlawful termination from the college.

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman has affirmed the decision of NMC's Employee Appeals Committee that found Angello's termination without cause in 2002 was proper.

"This court finds that the decision of the Employee Appeals Committee with respect to Angello's termination from employment at NMC is supported by substantial evidence," said Wiseman in his final order issued Thursday.

The judge ruled that Angello's termination did not violate his right to due process.

According to court records, on Sept. 23, 2002, then NMC president Dr. Kenneth Wright met with the NMC Board of Regents in an executive session.

During the executive session, Wright presented the results of a re-organization plan and distributed to the board a list of 11 employees who were to be terminated. The position held by Angello was among those terminated.

Wright then notified Angello in writing about his termination. Specifically, the letter informed Angello that his position had been eliminated, and that he was being terminated without cause pursuant to a provision of his contract with the college.

Angello, through his attorney, appealed to the Employee Appeals Committee.

At the Nov. 26, 2002 hearing before the Committee, Angello presented his complaint and appeal of his termination without cause for the committee to review. He also presented a letter outlining his grievances.

In January 2003, Angello presented a written argument and later supplemental written argument in support of his appeal.

NMC filed a written response.

On Feb. 14, 2003, the Committee issued its unanimous decision, finding that Angello was properly terminated without cause.

The Committee noted that the NMC president has the authority to appoint and terminate staff by Board Policy. It also noted that Angello freely signed his contract, and that he presented no argument to demonstrate that the contract of the Board Policy from which the contract language was developed were invalid.

Angello had cited a statute for the proposition that only the Board of Regents is given the statutory authority to appoint and terminate NMC employees. However, the Committee found that the statute also gave the Board the authority to delegate those responsibilities.

Angello filed an administrative appeal to the Superior Court. He asked the court to set aside his termination and the decision upholding NMC's action.

Angello appeared without counsel at the June 28, 2007 final arguments hearing. Attorney F. Matthew Smith appeared for the Committee.

In his final order, Wiseman said Angello was afforded most of the formalities consistent with a formal hearing, "such that a review under the arbitrary and capricious standard appears inappropriate."

Therefore, Wiseman said he will review the Board's treatment of Angello's appeal under the "substantial evidence" standard.

Despite the Board's failure to act in accordance with statutory procedure, the judge said he finds that the Board's failure to follow procedure is harmless because their approval was not required for the president to terminate Angello.

"True, it appears that Angello's termination was part of a larger plan of reorganization taking place within NMC, it is nevertheless irrelevant because the department duties once discharged by Angello were not eliminated by his firing but were instead redistributed to other faculty members," he said.

Wiseman said Angello was simply fired without cause, not as a result of the president taking action to disestablish Angello's department.

"Consequently, because Angello's department was left intact despite his termination, the president maintained his discretionary hiring and firing authority as delegated by the Board and was not required to seek Board approval prior to terminating Angello," the judge pointed out.

Thus, Wiseman said, as a result of the conclusion that the Board's approval was unnecessary for terminating Angello, the Board's failure to adhere to the open meeting requirement of the statute is insignificant for the purposes of reviewing the propriety of such termination.

He said Angello offered no authority to demonstrate that the hearing and proceedings afforded by the Board fell short of the minimal due process safeguards afforded under the U.S. and CNMI Constitutions.

Wiseman said that, although Angello was terminated two months prior to the conclusion of the term of his two-year contract, he retained the salary and benefits afforded by his employment until the expiration of that term.

Consequently, he said, Angello had no further property interest in continued employment with NMC that would implicate the due process protections under the CNMI or U.S. Constitutions.

"Even if Angello's due process rights were not implicated by his termination, it is evident from the record that Angello was afforded ample opportunity to be heard on the issue of his termination," the judge said.

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# Pete A. suggest federal funds for NMC

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth's resident representative to Washington, D.C. says the Northern Marianas College should work with the administration on how it can use federal funds to repair college facilities.

Tenorio

Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio said that the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs is willing to "de-obligate" funding for capital improvement projects that have not yet begun, so NMC will have the money needed to repair its facilities.

Tenorio noted that projects such as the Kalabera Cave development and the Lake Susupe boardwak "are clearly not as critical as keeping the college in good standing."

However, he said the governor must request OIA for permission to reprogram the funds. He urged NMC and the board of regents to work closely with the governor.

NMC is currently at risk of losing its accreditation. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges- Western Association of Schools and Colleges recently ordered NMC to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn. NMC has only a few months to comply with the order.

The commission took the action against NMC because the college has failed to address problems that had been ongoing for many years.

Accreditation is important because it proves to the public that a college meets standards of quality, and allows students to access financial aid programs. In addition, many institutions look at accreditation when deciding whether to allow transfer of credits.

In some cases, loss of accreditation could lead to closure of the college.

As of Jan. 24, 2008, the Northern Marianas had a backlog of CIP funds amounting to $57.4 million.

By U.S. law, Rota and Tinian should each receive at least one-eighth of the 702 funds allocated to the Commonwealth, so Saipan cannot utilize the entire amount.

A large reprogramming will have to be approved by DOI, Office of Management and Budget, and possibly the U.S. congressional appropriating committees.

# Bridge Investment to open Tinian HQ

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Bridge Investment Group, LLC will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its 2,600-square-foot local office at the top floor of the Bank of Guam building on Tinian next week.

The company's vice president for CNMI operations, Phillip Mendiola-Long, said that Bridge Investment spent quite a bit of money renovating the entire floor of the building, but opted not to disclose the actual cost of the project.

He said the company's Tinian headquarters, which is right across the Tinian Mayor's Office and Division of Labor, will house seven different offices and will include a main conference room and a design site area for the company's construction firm.

Mendiola-Long said the centerpiece of the design site area will be a scale model of Bridge Investment's Tinian Oceanview Resort and Condominiums project.

He said the top floor of the BoG building was leased from a local family on Tinian.

In other news, Mendiola-Long said the company is expecting the arrival of its construction firm, China-based Tianyuan Construction Group, from Feb. 26 to 29. Bridge Investment's construction company is expected to meet with the project's local A&E contractor, Herman B. Cabrera and Associates.

Aside from Herman B. Cabrera and Associates, Bridge Investment has also contracted the office of Mailman & Kara, certified public accountant Bruce Mailman, Marianas Development Corp. as its grounds maintenance firm, Power Buildings International as its local construction firm, FPA Inc. for ground clearing, and Marianas Environmental Services to work on its master site permit, environmental study, and prepare its report for the Historic Preservation Office.

Bridge Investment, which plans to construct a 301-room hotel and casino resort on Tinian as well as 268 condominium rooms in the CNMI's gambling capital, said it also has offices in five different countries—Japan, Korea, China, U.S., and Russia.

Bridge Investment is a company formed by U.S.-mainland based investors Erik F. Wang, Rudy Pamintuan, Howard Li, Ken Wong, Akshay Desai, and Rocky Li.

The Tinian Oceanview Resort and Condominiums project will be built on 75,000 square feet of land that the company has leased for 55 years.

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# CUC Water Connection Public Notice

This notice is to inform the public that Public Law 15-123, which became effective on December 3, 2007, requires the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") to bill power, water, and sewer separately, and to allow customers to reconnect their power or water services separately.

Public Law 15-123 provides that "the corporation [CUC] shall separate the electrical power, water consumption, and sewer services in its billing system. Consumers shall be permitted to pay for each utility service separately. The corporation shall not disconnect a consumer's water service for failure to pay for the electrical power portion of their bill. The corporation shall allow customers to reconnect water or power services upon payment of their water or power consumption charges and reconnection fees." See 4 CMC § 8143, as amended by Public Law 15-123.

Pursuant to Public Law 15-123, all customers of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation whose power and water services have been disconnected have the right to apply for water service reconnection separately from power service reconnection. However, CUC customers must pay a water reconnection fee of $30.00 plus, settle any outstanding balance on past water charges prior to the reconnection of their water service. Customers are no longer required to settle their outstanding power charges before applying for water service reconnection at CUC.

This is a public notice from the Office of Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz, member of the House of Representatives of the 16th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. If you have any questions or comments regarding this matter, you may contact the Office of Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz at 664-8928 or email his office at rep.delacruzf@cnmileg.gov.mp

This public notice is paid for by the Office of Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz.

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# Accreditation issues highlight NMC forum

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College held an accreditation forum yesterday to raise awareness on the college's accreditation progress and to clarify misconceptions and misguided speculations on its current standing.

NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, along with the Board of Regents, discussed with students, parents, and community members concerns and issues regarding NMC's show-cause order.

Fernandez explained to those in attendance how the college ended up in its current state.

NMC was placed on probation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges in January 2007. According to Fernandez, this was primarily so because of the lack of ability to do program review assessment.

"The reason why it is so critically important is because we need to be able to make improvements. And we need to be able to make decision for improvements based on data and evidence," said Fernandez.

On March 30, 2007, NMC submitted a progress report that was accepted by the ACCJC. The ACCJC met in June 2007 and decided to keep NMC on probation. NMC, again, was due for another progress report on Oct. 15, 2007.

In November 2007, the accrediting team paid a visit to NMC and gave the institution glowing marks.

However, the U.S. Department of Education had become more stringent in implementing the two-year rule, which provides no more than two years for an institution to correct deficiencies and come into full compliance with accreditation standards. It also requires accreditors to terminate accreditation if the two-year rule time limit is not met unless the commission identifies "good-cause" for extension.

And this, according to NMC, is what caused the upgrading of the college's sanction to show-cause in January 2008.

The USDE, Fernandez said, "is very concerned with American higher education," particularly with universities and colleges that are graduating students who are not prepared.

"So it's a very serious matter to the U.S. federal government. And one of the ways that they ensure American higher education institutions are offering quality education is by putting pressure on the Commission, to be able to ensure that they are in full compliance with accreditation standards," Fernandez said.

She also spoke of the trauma the management team and she went through on the day they found out about the show-cause order.

"Essentially, we would have been on a second year of probation and would have had until January to be full in compliance. But, instead of being put on probation, we were put on show cause," said Fernandez.

NMC has been asked by the ACCJC to submit two reports in the next few months.

The first one is due on March 15, 2008. It will address NMC's progress in resolving outstanding issues raised in a 2006 audit.

The second report, due on Oct. 15, 2008, is expected to demonstrate that the college has addressed the recommendations that the ACCJC raised.

The Oct. 15 report will be followed by a visit by the ACCJC representatives in November 2008.

Fernandez assured that as long as the college is still open, all credits, certificates, programs, and classes are accredited.

"I, for one, will tell you I came here as president to get us reaccredited and reaffirmed. I came here to turn this institution around and that's what I intend to do," said Fernandez.

In January 2009, the ACCJC will make their decision whether or not to reaffirm the college's accreditation. Loss of accreditation may result in NMC's shutdown.

## STROKES

*From Page 1*

The percentage is small because most strokes occur in older people. But the sudden spike in middle age and the reasons behind it are ominous, doctors said in research presented Wednesday at a medical conference.

It happened even though more women in the recent survey were on medicines to control their cholesterol and blood pressure—steps that lower the risk of stroke.

Women's waistlines are nearly two inches bigger than they were a decade earlier, and that bulge corresponds with the increase in strokes, researchers said.

In addition, women's average body mass index, a commonly used measure of obesity, rose from 27 in the earlier survey to 29. They also had higher blood sugar levels.

No other traditional risk factors like smoking, heart disease or diabetes changed enough between the two surveys to account for the increase in strokes.

In a "pre-stroke population" of middle-age women, a tripling of cases is "an alarming increase," said Dr. Ralph Sacco, neurology chief at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

The study was led by Dr. Amytis Towfighi, a neurology specialist at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, and presented at the International Stroke Conference in New Orleans.

She used the National Health and Nutrition Surveys, a federally funded project that gives periodic health checkups and questionnaires to a wide sample of Americans. Participants are routinely asked whether a doctor had ever told them they had had a stroke, and about 5,000 middle-aged people answered that question in each survey.

Researchers saw that the stroke rate had spiked in middle-aged women but stayed about the same—around 1 percent—in middle-aged men. So they looked deeper at the responses to see if they could learn why.

Belly fat stood out, Towfighi said. The portion of women with abdominal obesity rose from 47 percent in the earlier survey to 59 percent in the recent one. The change in men was smaller, and previous studies have shown that "abdominal obesity is a stronger risk factor for women than men," she said.

## OFFICIALS

*From Page 1*

diate facility improvements and fund master plans for a new campus for the Northern Marianas College.

This comes soon after NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez told the Legislature that the college needs roughly $3 million to fix its aging infrastructure and to get back on track with its accreditation goals.

Fernandez also said that she and other NMC officials had met with other members of the House of Representatives and the Senate and the college is expecting them to pass an increased budget for NMC to help fill in the position that the college needs.

Fernandez said that NMC needs to get reliable and consistent funding from the Legislature every year.

"Given the CNMI's very difficult financial difficulties, last year or so NMC took very, very big cuts and because we took very big cuts, we could not hire positions that we needed," said Fernandez.

The Association of Community and Junior Colleges is concerned about the college's leadership capability and the administrative and faculty support staff capacity to provide quality education.

"Another issue of concern that relates to financial difficulties is whether really the CNMI can support an institution of higher learning," Fernandez said. "But our elected leaders are being very supportive and they want to ensure that we get the resources we need to come into full compliance."

Washington Representative Pete A. Tenorio had also expressed his full support for the college in a letter to Fernandez.

Tenorio said that he checked with the Office of Insular Affairs and that the office is willing to "de-obligate" funding for CIP projects that have not yet begun so that the college will have funds needed to make necessary repairs to its facilities in compliance with the Western Association of Schools & Colleges show-cause order.

"There are several projects such as the Kalabera Cave development and the Lake Susupe Boardwalk that are clearly not as critical as keeping the college in good standing," said Tenorio.

NMC needs a total of $30 million to fully improve its facilities or to build a new campus.

## LABOR'S

*From Page 1*

sided with a local applicant who was applying for the post of front desk supervisor at Hafadai Beach Hotel. The hotel had initially rejected her application because she could not speak Japanese.

San Nicolas affirmed the administrative hearing officer's ruling on the language-preference issue and the decision to hire a local, Jannie M. Tenorio, as front desk supervisor.

The Secretary, however, reversed the hearing officer's order that allowed the former front desk supervisor, Jackilyn T. Ruan to transfer to another suitable employer.

San Nicolas granted Hafadai's request to allow the hotel to create and fund another position to retain Ruan as an employee.

"In these extremely difficult economic times, public policy favors the granting of Hafadai's request," San Nicolas pointed out.

Labor records show that Ruan's renewal application was denied based upon the employer's rejection of a local applicant, Tenorio, who had been deemed qualified by the Labor's Division of Employment Services and Training.

At the hearing, Saipan Hotel Corp., owner of Hafadai Beach Hotel, acknowledged that Tenorio has the basic skills to perform the job of front desk supervisor but argues that Tenorio's lack of Japanese language skills renders her unqualified.

In his administrative order issued on May 16, 2007, Hirshbein affirmed the Labor director's decision to deny Saipan Hotel Corp.'s application to renew the contract of Ruan as front desk supervisor at Hafadai Beach Hotel.

Hirshbein granted Ruan, an alien worker, 45 days to seek a new employer.

The hearing officer ruled that while the employer, Saipan Hotel Corp., stated in the Job Vacancy Announcement that they would prefer someone with Japanese language skills, it is not appear that such skills are prerequisite for the performance of the duties of this position.

"However, even if these skills are necessary, it appears that they are attainable through basic classes and on-the-job experience," he said.

Under these circumstances, Hirshbein pointed out, the employer is required to provide the necessary training.

Hafadai and Ruan appealed.

The appellants, through counsel Marcia K. Schultz, argued that contrary to the hearing officer's ruling, it is critical for a hotel to have Japanese speakers at the front desk as well as supervisors who can deal efficiently with emergency situations.

Hafadai said that after receiving the administrative order, the hotel offered Tenorio the position of front desk supervisor, which she accepted.

The hotel also began making arrangements to institute Japanese language training for its employees.

Hafadai requested the Labor Secretary to authorize the hotel to create and fund another position to retain Ruan so as to ensure that a Japanese-speaking staff is available on each shift at all times.

In his order, San Nicolas said Hirsbein properly handled the case.

San Nicolas said that, although Tenorio lacked the Japanese-language proficiency that distinguished her from Ruan, lack of a "preferred language skill" in itself is not enough to disqualify an otherwise qualified resident and U.S. citizen applicant.

The Secretary said Ruan herself testified at the hearing that she acquired her Japanese-language skills through attending language classes provided by her employer and through on-the-job training.

"Thus, Hafadai should hire and train Tenorio as it did with Ruan. In fact, CNMI Labor laws require such training," he pointed out.

San Nicolas said that since the hotel offered the job to Tenorio, the Tenorio hiring is no longer at issue at the time of the appeal.

"Nevertheless, it should be stated for the record that the hearing officer's ruling on the language issue should be affirmed," he added.

On the creation of a new position, San Nicolas said Ruan's employment is no longer an impediment to Tenorio's hiring.

"Moreover, Ruan's experience and language proficiency will be an asset that would contribute to the successful operation of this employer's business," he added.

## DELAY

*From Page 1*

for foreign national workers."

"If H.R. 3079 is not scrutinized carefully and amended to address all major stakeholders' concerns, including that of the Commonwealth government, community and local businesses, utter disaster will surely befall the Commonwealth," the senators stated in the resolution.

They asked the U.S. Senate to consider concerns of CNMI government and business leaders before acting on the bill. One such concern is the creation of an immigration board that would be made up of CNMI and federal government officials to review periodically the effectiveness of federal immigration policy in the Commonwealth.

The senators also said that a systematic study and report by the U.S. Governmental Accountability Office or other appropriate agency on the potential impact of the bill must be done before any final action is taken.

Senate Vice President Felix Mendiola sponsored the resolution. Sen. Maria T. Pangelinan was the only local Senate member to vote against it.

The CNMI immigration bill now awaits floor consideration by the Senate as part of Senate bill 2483, an omnibus bill made up of some 50 House-approved bills.

Title VII of the omnibus package, S. 2483, contains the exact text of H.R. 3079 as passed by the House on Dec. 12, 2007, and as approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee last month.

The bill would extend immigration law to the Northern Marianas and create a federally run guest-worker program in the Commonwealth. It would also give the CNMI a delegate in the House with limited voting powers. Currently, all U.S. possessions except the CNMI have a delegate in Congress.

The Senate had planned on passing the omnibus bill this month. But passage was derailed after a senator proposed a controversial amendment to one of the bills included in the package.

# Senators agree to keep status quo at LB

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate has called for status quo at the Legislative Bureau in a bid to end weeks of disagreement with the House of Representatives over the selection of a new director.

Members of the Upper House voted unanimously yesterday to adopt a resolution allowing LB director Joaquin P. Omar to serve out the rest of his employment contract.

The senators, which had wanted deputy director Glenna SP Reyes to replace Omar, said they were satisfied with Omar's performance.

"Despite budget cuts, the LB needs of the Legislature and its members were met adequately under the directorship of Mr. Joaquin P. Omar," the senators stated in the resolution.

Omar's contract will expire on Sept. 30, 2008.

The bureau director is appointed by the leadership of both houses of the Legislature. He or she may be removed with or without cause by the majority of the members of each house.

The Senate and the House expressed intent to install a new director shortly after they took office last month. But they cannot agree on whom to appoint.

The Senate backed Reyes, saying she has the hands-on experience and is already doing much of the work administering the legislative bureau.

The House leadership said the Senate's decision is tainted by nepotism. Reyes is the wife of Senate President Pete P. Reyes. The Republican-dominated House has picked Ed Tenorio, a Cabinet member in the Babauta administration, for the job.

## Joke about religion triggers machete attack

A joke about religion during a drinking session led to a machete hacking incident that injured a man at a house in China Town.

Asfat Ali sustained a cut to his right palm between the right thumb and index finger. The cut required three stitches. A small portion of skin on the right inner thumb was sliced off, according to court documents.

Ashik Uzzaman Khan, 35, was arrested Wednesday for assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace. A $25,000 cash bail was imposed for his temporary liberty.

At yesterday's preliminary hearing, Superior Court associate judge David Wiseman found probable cause to warrant the filing of charges against Khan.

Detective Peter A. Aldan stated in his report that in the evening of Jan. 24, 2008, Ali's friend, who had just arrived from Japan with several Japanese friends, invited him [Ali] to a welcome party, held at the second-floor apartment of Mohammad Islam. At the party, Ali and his friends, including Khan, were drinking and having dinner.

At 10pm, Khan, a Muslim, made a joke about the Hindu religion of one of the guests, Sukesh Chandra Barman. Khan, allegedly in a loud voice, also stated he would throw Barman down from the second floor.

Feeling bad, Barman left the party. Several other guests also left because they were afraid that something bad would happen.

Ali told Khan that because of what he did, their friends and visitors, including the Japanese guests, wanted to leave, too.

The defendant allegedly stood up, uttered profanities, and pushed and kicked Ali. Other friends tried to pacify them.

As Khan was sitting on a chair he noticed that one button of his shirt had been torn off, prompting him to shout again at Ali.

Khan ran downstairs where he and Ali had a fight. As some friends tried to stop them, Khan ran to his car where he took out a machete. Khan allegedly swung the machete at Ali, but the latter managed to grab and hold the blade.

Three friends got the machete and stopped Khan.

Ali called 911. Khan ran to his car and drove away, police said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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# Man in 'ice' case arrested anew for not cooperating

The Superior Court has revoked the release of a man who was earlier arrested for allegedly selling crystal methamphetamine or "ice" after reneging on his promise to assist law enforcers in their ongoing investigations.

The court revoked the release of defendant Jeff C. Magofna following chief prosecutor Jeffery Warfield Sr.'s request.

The court retained the $25,000 cash bail that was earlier imposed on the defendant.

At yesterday's hearing, associate judge Kenneth Govendo appointed the Public Defender's Office to represent the defendant and set the preliminary hearing for Feb. 28.

A detective stated in his report that on Jan. 22, 2008, members of the Drug Enforcement Task Force using a "cooperating source" managed to purchase $500 worth of "ice" from Magofna at the latter's residence in San Jose. Nine days later, police arrested the defendant after a monitored purchase of "ice."

The detective said Magofna waived his constitutional rights and asked that he be allowed to assist law enforcement as a confidential informant.

In exchange for his help, the defendant asked that the Department of Public Safety agree to release him on his own recognizance without cash bail, subject to certain terms.

The court granted the motion and sealed the case.

In the government's motion to revoke the release and to unseal documents filed on Wednesday, Warfield said Magofna did not cooperate with law enforcers.

Warfield said there is no need now to continue keeping under seal all documents and pleadings filed in this case nor should the defendant be permitted to remain on release without cash bail. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

MARK RABAGO

Tony Roma's and Capricciosa general manager Akira Onishi, left, and his staff are all smiles outside Tony Roma's restaurant in Garapan.

# Tony Roma's and Capricciosa happy with move to Garapan

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Tony Roma's and Capricciosa is celebrating its fourth year in Garapan this month and general manager Akira Onishi is happy that the twin restaurants made the move to the tourism and business district of Saipan.

The affable Onishi said being in Garapan, a stone's throw away from hotel street and the Paseo De Marianas, allows Tony Roma's and Capricciosa to better serve its customers.

Tony Roma's and Capricciosa opened its Garapan branches in Feb. 6, 2004, and Onishi said the establishments enjoyed good business during its first year.

Things, however, took a turn for the worse when Japan Airlines pulled out of the CNMI the next year. He said 2005 and 2006 were trying times for Tony Roma's and Capricciosa, but is proud to announce that, at last, business is finally picking up beginning the end of 2007 and the start of this year.

Onishi said Golden Week and the preponderance of charter flights from Japan and Russia have contributed to favorable customer turnover the first two months of the year.

While he admits that Tony Roma's and Capricciosa continues to cater to Japanese and local customers, he would like to tap into the emerging Korean and Russian market.

Onishi said currently his establishments attract next to nothing from the Korean market. He said the segment cannot be ignored any longer and it is his intention to penetrate it in the near future.

To this end, Onishi said a Korean language menu is already in the works and may come out next month, hot in the heels of the two restaurants' Russian language menu that has been a hit to guests from the former Soviet republic.

Tony Roma's and Capricciosa are open from 11am to 10:30pm everyday. For reservations, call Tony Roma's at 233-9193 or Capricciosa at 233-9194.

The Garapan branches of the restaurants at the former Louis Vuitton building are actually the second of both Tony Roma's and Capricciosa on Saipan. The original Saipan outlets of both restaurants at the La Fiesta Mall closed a couple years ago following the government's takeover of the facility.

# LISS concludes Science Camp

After six weeks of experiments, calculations, theories and conclusions, the Ladera International School finally concluded the science camp for students offered by and in conjunction with Missouri Academy.

Dr. Marilyn Rhea, head of the Science Curriculum at Missouri Academy, and Dr. Patricia Lucido have been conducting the LISS science camp activities since January 2008.

Over 20 students from the third to the ninth grade participated in this winter's six-week science camp.

According to Lucido, the camp aimed to help students meet their educational needs and open doors of opportunity for students to reach their full potential.

LISS director Wayne Pangelinan said, "Strengthening our students in the field of science will only enhance the future workforce for the CNMI and abroad."

"We are pleased to offer such benefits where our local children can use these privileges to build on themselves. The Science Camp offered at LISS is unique and quite impressive as they are up-to-date learning activities designed to challenge young minds," he added.

The science camp is being conducted twice a year at the LISS during the winter and summer seasons: four weeks during the summer and six weeks during winter.

LISS says they will continue to offer privileges educational opportunities from Missouri Academy and Northwest Missouri State University.

LISS is in partnership with Horace Mann, Missouri Academy and Northwest Missouri State University. ***(Rianne Pangelinan-Brown)***

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# SSHS library gets $2,000 for reading project

Reading Rave Project is a reading and literacy program that takes place in the Saipan Southern High School library between Jan. 30, 2008 to May 25, 2008. Twelve highly motivated SSHS students participate in lively book discussions, share their thoughts about the books online and recruit other high school students to read the selected book titles chosen for this project.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Southern High School's Reading Rave participants are, top, from right to left, Steven Centino, Ann Flores, Merey Len Denora, Donna Formalejo, Kathleen Laurio, and Albert Palacios. Bottom, from right to left, are Jan Alcantara, Cherita Yangirelfil, Jocelyn Cabrera, Kaelani Demapan, Ma-Theszaray Omar and Mrs. Sudi Q. Napalan. Not in picture: Chantel Taitano.

"It's exciting to interact with dynamic and energetic high school students who enjoy reading! I am pleased to have a library program that provides leisure activities for our students and increases the youth reading and literacy in our school. I am very happy that the Northern Marianas Islands Council for the Humanities gave us the support and funding for this literacy project," says Sudi Napalan, the Reading Rave Project Director and SSHS school librarian.

Reading Rave will increase the promotion of healthy reading habits to local high school students. It will also raise student leaders for literacy and advocacy to their peers that will help their generation to love and enjoy reading. Reading Rave participants will be posting their interesting thoughts about their monthly reading in a blog. Visit http://sshslibrary.blogspot.com/ for updates about this project.

This project was made possible by support from the Northern Marianas Islands Council for the Humanities, a nonprofit, private corporation funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities. ***(PR)***

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# Senate OKs CPA, PUC appointees

The Senate has approved two appointments submitted by the administration.

All members voted to confirm the appointment of Alejo M. Mendiola Jr. to the board of directors of the Commonwealth Ports Authority, and Kimberlyn King-Hinds to the Public Utilities Commission.

Mendiola, a former vice speaker of the House of Representatives, will serve out what is left of the term of Melchor A. Mendiola, who resigned from the board recently. Melchor Mendiola's term would have expired on May 14, 2010.

King-Hinds will represent Tinian on the utilities commission.

The House of Representatives has yet to confirm the appointment of King-Hinds. PUC nominations require the consent of both the Senate and the House.

King-Hinds is a former chairwoman of the Northern Marianas College board of regents. She resigned in June 2006 to pursue graduate studies at the University of Guam, and is back in the Commonwealth.

The Fitial administration is still struggling to get a complete list of six nominees for the commission. The governor has submitted many names since the commission was formed by law in 2006.

Most of the nominations were withdrawn to avoid confirmation deadline to expire on them. Other nominees declined for health reasons. In the case of one appointee, her nominee was canceled after concern was raised about possible conflict of interest.

Existing law requires PUC approval of any adjustment to utility rates, including power rates. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***



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# More students being placed in level III English

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
Rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College says that English placement scores have risen to the point that placement is now primarily in the English Reading III and English Writing III levels.

"Over approximately the last eight years, the percentage of students taking the NMC placement test and placing in at least one developmental English course has been at about 87 percent," said NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez.

After several years, most taking the NMC placement test placed at the English Reading & Writing II level. Over time, Fernandez explained, placement scores have risen to level III.

Fernandez

Fernandez explained that NMC is an open admission institution. "Students are required to take placement tests to identify their readiness for college level English."

She said that this is typical of U.S. public higher education institutions that have an open admission status.

"NMC is currently re-evaluating its use of TOEFL and plans to implement the most suitable placement test for our conditions," said Fernandez.

Some residents have raised concerns about students being placed in developmental math and English course not earning degree credits.

This, Fernandez said, "is a genuine concern of the Scholarship Office as well."

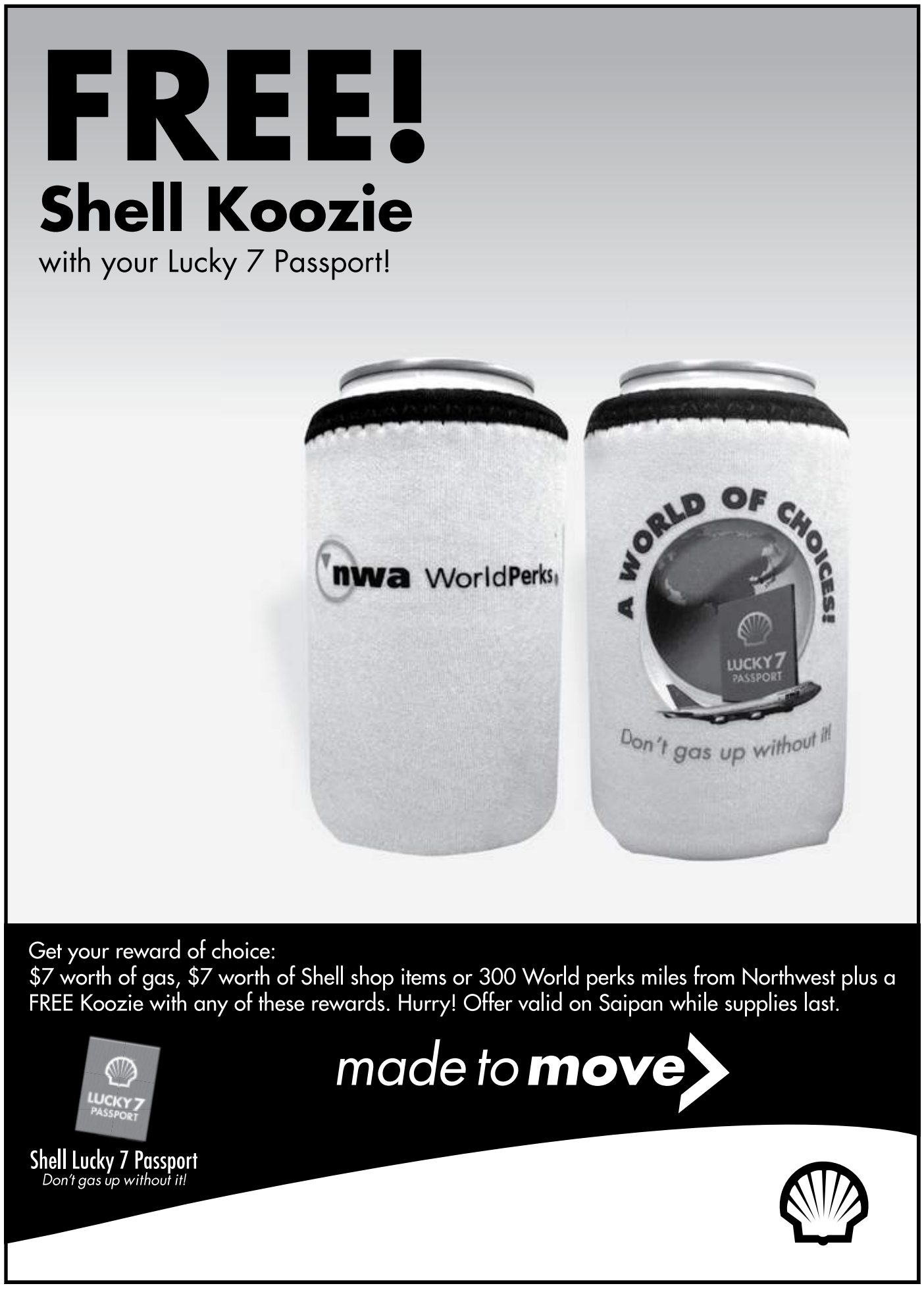
She added that students can take up to 12 credits in developmental math and English and receive a CNMI scholarship.

"As for the federal Pell grant, students can take up to 15 credits of developmental coursework and maintain their eligibility," she said

Fernandez said, "The fact that both the federal and local government financial aid allows payment for developmental coursework is recognition that this area is a national challenge."

She further added that it is not within her authority to allow CNMI high school students to enter college English before placement has been identified.

"However, we assure you that every effort is being made to assist students through the process, including tutoring, mentoring, and dedicated English faculty time," Fernandez added.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## Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

### February 22, 2000

**CNMI employment rate up 183 percent**
Nourished by development in the Commonwealth's two major industries and its access to foreign workers, growth in the local economy has allowed local residents enjoy rapid increase in wages in 20 years, according to a report from the U.S. government. The U.S. General Accounting Office also revealed that employment on Saipan improved faster by 183 percent than the island's population growth rate, which increased by 169 percent between 1980 and 1999.

**CNMI sets up vocational programs**
Heeding a recommendation from economic experts, the CNMI government is laying down the ground work for major changes in vocational programs aimed at helping local students develop skills that will make them competitive for private sector employment. The Public School System and the Northern Marianas College are carrying out fundamental changes in educational and vocational programs that will not only prepare students to take private sector jobs but will also shift their concept on guest worker-held jobs.

**Beverage tax sought for recycling plan**
The Solid Waste Task Force has asked the CNMI government to earmark 50 percent of the money collected from the beverage container tax for the island's recycling program. Implementing a recycling program is a necessary component of an island-wide solid waste facility plan since it will be very expensive for the administration to keep on expanding or building a landfill in the future, according to John Harder, Municipal Waste Program manager.

### February 22, 2001

**Reyes passes the buck on LaMotte**
If they could only summon him from Virginia. Senate Majority Floor Leader Pete Reyes yesterday said former Public Auditor Leo LaMotte is partly responsible for the problems now plaguing the Office of the Public Auditor. In his assessment, Mr. Reyes, said that if the previous internship programs of the OPA have just become successful an extension on the "sunset" provision of Public Law 10-4 would not have been needed.

**Youths take chances on off-island training**
Local youths trooped to the Multi-Purpose Center yesterday to grab a unique opportunity of landing a fully-subsidized off-island vocational education experience offered by the Hawaii Job Corps Center. Visiting Job Corps Business and Community Liaison Jack Tuttle disclosed the firm will initially select five eligible youths from the group of applicants who showed up at the recruitment site yesterday, with high hopes of qualifying for the much sought-after program.

**Inter-island tour package seen to boost tourism**
Entangled in a virtually long period of economic slump, the Marianas Visitors Authority is now looking at working with its Guam counterpart for a possible inter-island tour package to perk up visitor arrivals in the region. CNMI tourism officials are planning to meet with their compeer in the Guam Visitors Authority to discuss concerted programs that may encourage increased visitors traffic to the Mariana Islands.

### February 22, 2002

**Babauta, Tenorio team up in DC**
**WASHINGTON**—Gov. Juan N. Babauta and Resident Representative Pete A. Tenorio have joined forces in Washington D.C. to promote issues vital to the future of the Northern Marianas. Babauta is in Washington for the midwinter national Governor's Association Conference that begins Saturday. He will also attend a Pacific Basin Development Council meeting which follows the NGA Conference.

**Residents show interest in NMC-CREES programs**
Marine shrimp, pallet gardening, herbs, insects, gnats, water quality, EFNEP, 4-H sewing, were just a few words thrown at the many distinguished guests and individuals during the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Service first Annual Open House. The Open House was intended to provide our distinguished guests and the community a chance to learn more about and participate in their programs. Those who attended the open house were not only treated with delicious fruits, snacks and drinks, but were treated with a wealth of knowledge and a great experience as well.

# NMC offers college preparatory program

The Northern Marianas College is seeking high school students who have a strong interest and talent in science, math, or engineering to participate in a competitive summer bridge program that will help them prepare for college.

The bridge program, funded by the "Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation" program, prepares future college freshmen for the unexpected and stressful experiences of the first year in college. The main goal of the LSAMP program is to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the fields of science, math, and engineering. These minority groups include American Indians, African American, people of Hispanic origin, and Pacific Islanders. Last year, LSAMP participants who had earned their bachelor's degree received $40,500 per year to complete their advanced degrees.

During the eight-week program, which will begin June 9, 2008 and end on Aug. 1, 2008, students will be enrolled in a college life skills course and will also take two transferable, college level courses: college trigonometry and general chemistry. The LSAMP program will pay all costs for tuition, supplies, and fees.

In addition to a strong interest in science, math, and engineering, applicants need to be U.S. citizens. Because space is limited to 10 students, acceptance into the program will be based on several competitive criteria that include strong performance on the math and English placement tests.

To recruit eligible students, NMC will enlist the assistance of high school principals and counselors. Interested applicants are also asked to contact Glenn Keaton, chairperson of the NMC Sciences, Mathematics, Health and Athletics Department at 670-234-3690 Ext. 1200 or 1205. ***(NMC)***

## NMC TRIO Open House today

The Northern Marianas College will be hosting an open house event today, Feb. 22, 2008, that will feature three of its federally funded programs. The three programs, which are all a part of "TRIO," include Student Services, the Talent Search Program, and the Upward Bound Program. The open house will be held in Buildings "J" and "I" from 8am to 5pm.

"The TRIO open house is a great opportunity for students and other community members to learn about the different programs that NMC offers," said NMC president Dr. Fernandez. "I especially encourage parents to come find out how we can help their children prepare for college success."

The Student Support Services Office provides student with career guidance, information on financial support for college, and related support programs for student achievement.

The Talent Search program identifies and assists individuals who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to the postsecondary school of their choice. The goal of Talent Search is to increase the number of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed in high school and enroll in a college of their choice. It is designed to help high school students prepare for college.

Upward Bound provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their pre-college performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families along with high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education.

All community members are encouraged to participate in the open house event. ***(NMC)***

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### ChaCha Q3 progress reports out today

The ChaCha Ocean View Junior High will be having its 3rd Quarter progress report night today, Feb. 22, from 4pm to 6pm. All ChaCha Ocean View parents are encouraged to come and speak with their children's teachers. Students will also be released at 12:30pm on this day. ***(PR)***

### MCS Class of '88 meeting today

This is to inform the Class of 1988 of Our Lady of Mount Carmel High School that there will be a meeting today, Feb. 22, 2008, at the VFW Post 3457 at 6pm in Garapan to discuss upcoming events for the 20th class reunion. All classmates are encouraged to attend. For more information contact Angela at 287-6231 or Tami at 234-6442. ***(PR)***

### Meeting of the Autism Society of the CNMI

The Autism Society of the CNMI will be holding its monthly meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2008 at 5:30pm at the Herman's Bakery Conference Room. Information regarding the group and future meetings will be available at this meeting. All families and friends of children with autism are invited to attend.

For additional information, call John at 234-8803/4 or Larrisa at 322-3761 or send an email to as_cnmi@yahoo.com. ***(PR)***

### PAWS Kids' Night Out is back!

For parents, enjoy some special time to yourselves! For kids, join in the fun, food, and friends

The PAWS Kids' Night out will be held on Friday, Feb. 29, 6pm – 10pm, at the Whimsy Room of the Saipan Grand Hotel. The cost is $10 for the first child, and $5 for each additional sibling, ages 3-12.

Check in is at 6pm – 6:30pm (No drop offs after 6:30). Pick up is by 10pm but early pickups are welcome.

Register via phone at 285-PAWS (285-7297) or via email at melissasimms56@hotmail.com. This event is sponsored by the Saipan Grand Hotel. ***(PAWS)***

### MHS Class of '78 meeting

MHS Class of 1978 will be meeting tomorrow, Feb. 23, 2008 at 2pm at Snack 'N Go in Dandan, across from the Joeten Dandan Building. ***(PR)***

### Live-fire training at Farallon

The Emergency Management Office, in conjunction with U.S. Naval Forces Marianas Guam, said that the U.S. military would be conducting live-fire training on the island of Farallon De Mendenilla on Feb. 26 – 29, 2008, from 9am to 7pm.

The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon De Mendenilla training area on a 10 nautical-mile radius on all quadrants.

Due to the danger imposed by this activity, EMO is advising the public, especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators, to stay away from this area during the time and dates indicated.

For more information, contact the MO's Operations Section at telephone numbers 322-9528 and 322-9529, VHF MARINE CHNL 16, and HF Single Side Band Radio on 5.205.0. ***(EMO)***

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# Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XVIII, Issue No. 53

Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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## EDITORIAL

# Big Brother steps down

"A ruling group is a ruling group so long as it can nominate its successors," George Orwell wrote in "1984." "Who wields power is not important, provided that the hierarchical structure remains always the same." Mr. Orwell's words have eerie relevance to Fidel Castro's announcement this week that he is turning over the presidency of Cuba to his brother Raul. Nothing could be more consistent with the ailing Mr. Castro's 49-year dictatorship than the manner in which he has (at least formally) ended it.

By now it's a cliche that Mr. Castro outlasted nine American presidents, some of whom tried to oust him, some of whom tried to negotiate with him—and all of whom were unlike him, in that they faced elections and term limits. Mr. Castro survived the plots of Cuban exiles; repeated waves of mass emigration; and near-catastrophic economic decay brought on by his Soviet-style policies. To be sure, the benefits of Mr. Castro's revolution, such as national health care and universal education, bought him the loyalty—or the dependency—of many Cubans. But the key to his success was systematic political policing. Though all Cubans feel its effects, Mr. Castro's repression often fell most harshly on his inner circle. Repeated purges have refined it to a hard core that Mr. Castro apparently trusts to perpetuate his regime.

Mr. Castro has been lucky, too. The Soviet Union subsidized him until its collapse in 1991. Then, just when it appeared that the Cuban regime might crack because of its own incompetence and a U.S. trade embargo, a new ideological ally, President Hugo Chavez of oil-rich Venezuela, bailed it out. Thus, Mr. Castro retires without being held accountable for turning one of Latin America's most developed economies into a bankrupt sugar plantation. He escapes accountability, too, for killing hundreds of political opponents and imprisoning thousands more; for sending Cuban soldiers to kill and die in wars between African tyrants; and for arming and training violent Latin American guerrillas. Nor will he ever answer for the deaths of those who perished fleeing his rule by sea.

Will Raul Castro be any different? Nothing fundamental in Cuba has changed in the almost 19 months since Fidel, 81, temporarily handed the reins to his 76-year-old defense minister. Raul Castro is thought to be more practical than his brother on economic issues, and less ruthless. He has called on university students to debate Cuba's problems "fearlessly." In 1989, when Fidel ordered the executions of allegedly disloyal senior officials, including Raul's favorite army general, the younger Castro admitted weeping over the purge. Yet he backed it unequivocally. Still committed to one-party rule, Raul may hope to use what's left of his life to build Chinese-style market communism.

The changes in Cuba will set off renewed debate over U.S. policy toward Cuba. While the discussion is appropriate, it's important to remember that, by the measure of the most fundamental goal of U.S. policy—that Cuba become a democracy that respects human rights—nothing has changed with Mr. Castro's retirement. Any U.S. strategy for Cuba must be aimed at giving Cubans the leverage to demand that transformation, in spite of what Mr. Castro and his heirs might intend.

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# Ocean power and random napkins

**By ED STEPHENS**
*Special to the Saipan Tribune*

*Ed's column runs on Fridays. Visit him at SaipanBlog.com and TropicalEd.com.*

Every few years, some random guy will grab a cocktail napkin and sketch out for me his sure-fire plan to make electricity from Saipan's surf. It's not the same random guy each time, by the way, it's always a different one.

The ideas, as far as I can follow them, involve using waves or tides to drive generators of some sort. It's an intriguing concept, especially, of course, on an island with perpetually warm (not frozen) waters, so if we have to take jobs in the maintenance side of things, at least we won't freeze to death when we swim to the job-site.

Meanwhile, you may recall that earlier this week, oil closed (for the first time that I can remember) over the $100 a barrel mark. Everyone has got energy on the brain. Again.

So, brace yourself, Commonwealth, your CUC bills are more likely to go up than down. Under these circumstances taking a generator from your old Subaru, hooking it up to a Styrofoam cooler, a boogie board, and a few pieces of rebar, then dangling the contraption off of Bonsai cliff is a tempting idea, at least if Joeten Ace Hardware puts extension cords on sale again.

But unfortunately, cocktail napkins aside, the world won't soon have a serious and sober discussion on ocean power. People like the big, easy, simple answers to problems but, having worked in the alternative energy industry (wind power, in my case), I know that any given project is really based on 10,000 details and a lot of hard economic realities, and not a few feel-good generalities. Slogans and bumper stickers won't generate electricity.

And, just as cynically, I'll note that things get even stickier on Saipan, since we have so many talkers these days and so few doers. So I'm hesitant to even bring up the specter of ocean power, lest I inspire a barrage of shady schemes, but, what the heck, it's still fun to think about.

Thinking of the more memorable cocktail napkin discussions I've heard on the subject, I web surfed to see if I could find any definitive information on this realm, but everything I came across was long on sales talk and short on usable technical details. Maybe verifiable and documented information on installed capacity, load factors, and levelized energy costs is available, but I haven't yet come across any of it. Not that it really matters; I play no role in that part of the industry, so my interest in merely casual and curious.

Overall, be you on Saipan or in the South Pole, the whole point behind energy is that you can use it when you want it, not when circumstances, or somebody else, decides you can have some. And as unglamorous as oil is, there simply is not a practical substitute for it. If there was, then oil wouldn't be so expensive. Oil's derivatives power your car, CUC plants, submarines under the water (many of them, at least), and airplanes in the sky. It's easy to store. It's easy to transport. Nothing else does all these things so gracefully, and it may be 100 years, or more, or perhaps never, until something better comes along.

Will the waters of the Saipan-Tinian channel ever be harvested for cheap electricity? Some folks like to talk about it, but I just don't know. I'm sure that yet another cocktail napkin engineer will have more definite opinions on the topic; and, in fact, I figure I'm about due to encounter one of those guys soon, when randomness once again gives way to inevitability.

■ ■ ■

"It has often been said that power corrupts. But it is perhaps equally important to realize that weakness, too, corrupts. Power corrupts the few, while weakness corrupts the many. Hatred, malice, rudeness, intolerance, and suspicion are the faults of weakness. The resentment of the weak does not spring from any injustice done to them but from the sense of inadequacy and impotence."

—Eric Hoffer

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# Article XII resolved

*Editor's Note: The following is an article that the author submitted to the NMI Humanities Council for publication. The council will be hosting an online publication containing essays on land ownership written by local authors.*

**By AMBROSE M. BENNETT, MA Ed.**
*Special to the Saipan Tribune*

The CNMI Covenant contains a Land Alienation Act to be revisited in the year 2011. Article XII of the Covenant has represented the biggest challenge to the indigenous people to retain control of the land, which has resulted in a negative affect on the social and the economic outcomes associated with the ownership of land. Article XII is clearly in direct violation of the U.S. Constitution, which is why the Land Alienation Act is mandated to be addressed by the people of the CNMI in 2011. There is a two-prong test based on the principles of equality & law (14th Amendment of the U. S. Constitution) that must be applied in resolving the conflict between the CNMI Covenant and the U.S. Constitution.

## The History

The Land Alienation Act was imposed to *assure that the indigenous people would not be overrun by investors in land speculation.* The delay in allowing equal land ownership for all U.S. citizens was to give the indigenous people an opportunity to get a head start on creating communities for the indigenous people and to establish land ownership among the indigenous people for economic purposes. It was never the intentions of the U.S. federal government to allow the Land Alienation Act to remain in effect for all time, which is why a vote was mandated in the Covenant negotiations. The federal government also made it very clear in the records of the negotiations for the CNMI to eventually comply with the 14th Amendment *(No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction to equal protection of the laws).*

It is a violation of the principle of equality and federal law whenever laws and activities of any fashion by a State or people of that state violate the rights of one group of U.S. citizens and advances the rights of another group of U.S. citizens. Article XII has served as an incubator for growing bias and discrimination among the indigenous people. There are many of examples of how the sole right of the indigenous people to own land has evolved beyond the land issue to include representation in government and economic opportunities. It is bad enough that Article XII already dictates that *only the indigenous people can own land* but we are experiencing full page advertisements in the local newspapers during the 2005 elections to *vote for only local people* and the recent Saipan Casino Act Initiative that would have disenfranchised other U. S. citizens by proposing *ownership by only the indigenous people* and there are other examples of how Article XII has served as an incubator for growing conflicts with the core values and principles of America and federal law.

The right of many indigenous people to *free enterprise* has also been abridged by Article XII. The Article forces the indigenous people to sell only to another indigenous person, which has led to the constant low value of real estate with virtually no growth in the real estate market or the value of land. This has contributed to a great deal of *land speculation purchases* of property from private land owners by other indigenous people at extremely cheap prices. The indigenous people have become victims of land speculation by their own people and their own Covenant. Article XII is like a double edged sword cutting both the indigenous and non-indigenous by denying the right of free enterprise to the indigenous people to sell their private land to a fellow U. S. citizen who has the right to own land in the CNMI under federal law.

Finally, the 1/16th percentage of indigenous blood requirement in Article XII requirements will virtually eliminate everyone from owning land over time. There is also the adoption law phenomenon that allows for anyone that is adopted by an indigenous person to have full rights to land ownership and treated as an indigenous person. It is very clear that Article XII will not withstand the test of time under these conditions that clearly conflict with the principle of equality and the right of every U.S. citizen to own property and to be a full participant in the government. The challenge for the indigenous people will be: *to come to a realization that the people of the CNMI must share and be fair in the American family and to find the middle ground to satisfy their expectations and the expectations of living up to the values, principles and laws of the American family.*

## The Resolution

How to preserve the birth rights of land control for the indigenous people versus the granting of constitutional rights guaranteed to every U.S. citizen? This is the question about Article XII that must be asked, answered and resolved.

The conflicts between states and the federal government are always resolved based on the premise that federal law is the supreme law of the land. There is only one solution to correct the inequality and disenfranchisement of non-local U. S. citizens imposed by Article XII and that is to comply with federal law. The real challenge will be how the compliance is implemented, which is the purpose of this essay.

Change is an unavoidable force and it is clearly visible on the horizon that Article XII must be changed. CNMI law must be changed to accommodate the need for equality and longevity in the right to own land. Retaining indigenous control of land while creating equality in landownership can easily be achieved with the two methodologies being proposed in this essay. One methodology is to simply allow every U. S. citizen to own *one house lot and one business lot* which fulfills the right of property ownership. Although the right will be limited, it complies with the U. S. Constitution and it also does not impede the rights and ability of non-locals U.S. citizens to pursue prosperity and their American Dream.

A person can only live in one home and they only need the right to own property for one business as the U.S. Constitution does not infer or imply otherwise. This recommended change in Article XII will be more than sufficient to satisfy the conflict with federal law for land ownership.

The limited landmass of the CNMI also offers a strong argument for limiting the ownership of land to non-locals and entrepreneurship in land speculation or rights to participate in the real estate market *are not* reasonable arguments to expand full rights of unlimited land ownership to every U.S. citizen. The indigenous people will retain control of the real estate market and still resolve the conflict with the federal law.

Another alternative methodology to amending Article XII is to create a dual land ownership system similar to the Native American Reservation System where *land is put aside solely for use by the indigenous people* of the CNMI. In fact, the Homestead System is already a Reservation System because only the indigenous people can own a homestead lot. The challenge for the CNMI will be to institute laws and safeguards to ensure that no one owns more than one lot in a homestead. Under this dual system of land ownership all U.S. citizens can be granted their right to own an unlimited amount of property in the CNMI. Creating a reservation for the indigenous people will define the land that can only be owned by indigenous people for all time. This methodology is also a futuristic approach because once all the homesteads have been given out on the populated islands it is obvious the future reservation(s) will have to be on one of the presently uninhabited islands that have the most potential to be developed in the future.

These are just two possible methodologies to a resolution of the conflict between the two laws. However, it is important to note the bonuses of creating equal property rights status for all U.S. citizens living in the CNMI. The CNMI has what economists refer to as *a developing economy* with only two industries but Article XII has all but killed the real estate industry of the CNMI. The real estate market is a multi-billion dollar industry that is an intricate part of every state's economy. There are also many subsidiary industries that depend on the development and sale of real estate which is driven primarily by the value of the (land) real estate.

By creating equality in land ownership for all U.S. citizens, the CNMI's real estate market will finally become a reality. The CNMI will finally have a vital component of the CNMI's economy fully functional. We will finally see an end to communities consisting of a house lot–tangan tangan lot–house lot–tangan tangan lot and so on in almost every village. With a vibrant real estate market the value of property will continue to rise, the construction industry will grow and become more stable, villages will finally become fully developed, the indigenous people will get fair market value for their land and multiple sources of new revenues for the government will come. Having a real estate market will activate the many nuances of economic improvements that accompany a growing and stable real estate market.

In both of the methodologies for resolving Article XII the indigenous people will still acquire free homesteads while other citizens will have to pay for a house lot and/or business lot. The indigenous people will have control of the real estate market because they will still have the right to own multiple properties while non-indigenous can only own one or two at the most. The CNMI is also much bigger than Saipan, Tinian and Rota and we must begin focusing and remaining cognizant of this fact when considering the final solution to Article XII.

Article XII must also be amended to accommodate the future generations of indigenous people under the 1/16th Marianas decent requirement because future generations of indigenous people will NOT meet the requirement to be given an indigenous status. The best resolution for a perpetual system is to adopt the same practice used by Native Americans. Any indigenous person of the CNMI should only need to show *documented proof of their ancestral bloodline connections* for a person to be granted their birth rights as a Chamorro or Carolinian. This is a perpetual system that is also used by an overwhelming majority of societies throughout the world in countries that evolved as a single ethnic group.

Like most Constitutional issues, the resolution of the Article XII issue will be dictated in part by a strict or loose interpretation of the Constitution and the Covenant. But the true challenge in resolving constitutional issues has always been the will of the people to fully apply the core values and principles of America with the will to CHANGE. The U. S. Constitution, the CNMI Constitution and the Covenant are all *living documents* that MUST adapt to the ever changing social, economic and political phenomena of the CNMI and maintain the integrity of the core values and principles of America while being driven to change by the *will of the people*.

I want to thank the NMI Humanities Council for sponsoring the activity to find solutions for the CNMI. The Council has performed a very important and valuable civic service by sponsoring the search for resolutions to Article XII. I would also like to give credit in part to the James Madison Foundation for providing me with the Fellowship to become a U.S. Constitutional Scholar, which helped tremendously in empowering me with the constitutional knowledge to pen this paper. It is my sincere prayer that this paper will be of some help in finding a resolution to Article XII. I will be truly humbled but very glad to know that I have helped the people of the CNMI to create a better and brighter future for the CNMI and *all* U.S. citizens living in the CNMI.

"The U. S. Constitution, the CNMI Constitution and the Covenant are all *living documents* that MUST adapt to the ever changing social, economic and political phenomena of the CNMI and maintain the integrity of the core values and principles of America while being driven to change by the *will of the people*."

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

# The Weather

## 5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

| TODAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph. | Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. | Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. |
| ▲83º ▼75º | ▲82º ▼73º | ▲81º ▼74º | ▲81º ▼74º | ▲81º ▼75º |

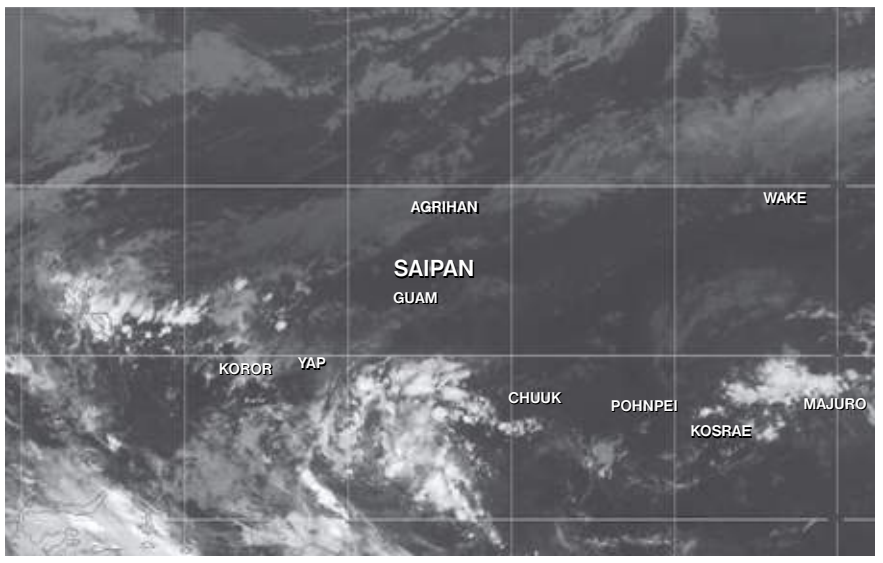
## Micronesia

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Mostly Sunny | ▲85 | ▼75 |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | ▲85 | ▼77 |
| Yap | Thunderstorms | ▲85 | ▼77 |
| Chuuk | Cloudy | ▲87 | ▼77 |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorms | ▲84 | ▼72 |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorms | ▲83 | ▼72 |
| Majuro | Partly Sunny | ▲85 | ▼77 |

## Around The Globe

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Auckland | Mostly Cloudy | ▲71 | ▼63 |
| Beijing | Mostly Sunny | ▲45 | ▼26 |
| Hong Kong | Showers | ▲68 | ▼65 |
| Honolulu | Mostly Sunny | ▲78 | ▼66 |
| London | Mostly Cloudy | ▲54 | ▼37 |
| Los Angeles | Rain | ▲62 | ▼49 |
| Manila | Thunderstorms | ▲82 | ▼75 |
| Melbourne | Cloudy | ▲74 | ▼49 |
| Miami | Partly Sunny | ▲84 | ▼71 |
| New York | Snow | ▲34 | ▼27 |
| Osaka | Mostly Sunny | ▲54 | ▼35 |
| Paris | Mostly Cloudy | ▲56 | ▼40 |
| Pusan | Sunny | ▲58 | ▼27 |
| Rome | Mostly Sunny | ▲60 | ▼42 |
| Salem | Rain | ▲50 | ▼35 |
| San Francisco | Rain | ▲59 | ▼46 |
| Seoul | Mostly Sunny | ▲39 | ▼21 |
| Tokyo | Partly Sunny | ▲55 | ▼39 |
| Washington, DC | Ice | ▲37 | ▼33 |

## Yesterday's Satellite Image




**PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, THURSDAY, FEB. 21, 2008**
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

An old shear line stretches southwestward from 21N180 to south of Wake Island at 18N166E to end southwest of Guam at 11N140E. Patchy clouds and scattered showers are found along and up to 80 miles northwest of this boundary. A cold front extends southwestward from 25N180 to north of Wake Island at 20N166E then continues as a shear line to near Anatahan at 16N146E to 11N130E and beyond. Extensive cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 350 miles northwest of this feature. A surface trough reaches northwestward from EQ144E to 9N144E. Low-level convergence associated with the trough is triggering scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms in a large area southeast of Yap and Koror. This area is south of a line from EQ132E to 10N140E to 10N150E. A trade-wind disturbance is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms from east of Pohnpei to the Marshall Islands or within 170 miles of a line from 8N159E to 8N170E to 3N177E.

## Tides

| Saipan Harbor | | |
|---|---|---|
| 02:32AM Today | Low Tide: | 0.2 Feet |
| 09:01AM Today | High Tide: | 2.0 Feet |
| 03:01PM Today | Low Tide: | 0.7 Feet |
| 08:22PM Today | High Tide: | 1.9 Feet |

## Sunrise/Sunset

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:39AM | 6:23PM |
| Saturday | 6:38AM | 6:23PM |
| Sunday | 6:38AM | 6:23PM |
| Monday | 6:37AM | 6:24PM |
| Tuesday | 6:37AM | 6:24PM |

## Moonrise/Moonset

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 07:21PM | 07:08AM |
| Saturday | 08:10PM | 07:44AM |
| Sunday | 08:59PM | 08:20AM |
| Monday | 09:48PM | 08:55AM |
| Tuesday | 10:37PM | 09:32AM |

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- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
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**SUBSCRIPTION** Published Monday to Sunday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $182. Off-island subscription rate is $376 per year. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 15, 2008

### DEPARTURES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Saipan-Rota** | | | |
| CO 9313 | 8:30am | 9:05am | 3,4,7 |
| **Saipan-Guam** | | | |
| CO9317 | 5:00am | 5:50am | Daily |
| CO9597 | 8:30am | 9:20am | 1,2,5,6 |
| CO9313 | 8:30am | 10:00am | 3,4,7 via Rota |
| CO9601 | 12:30pm | 1:20pm | Daily |
| CO9603 | 3:30pm | 4:20pm | Daily |
| CO9605 | 6:30pm | 7:20pm | Daily |
| CO9599 | 9:30pm | 10:20pm | Daily |
| **Saipan-Narita** | | | |
| NW 078 | 8:25am | 1:30pm | Daily via Nagoya |
| NW 075 | 4:50pm | 7:30pm | Daily |
| **Saipan-Osaka** | | | |
| NW 083 | 4:30pm | 7:25pm | Daily |
| **Saipan-Nagoya** | | | |
| NW 078 | 8:25am | 11:05am | Daily |
| **Saipan-Manila** | | | |
| CO 895 | 4:45pm | 6:35pm | 6 |
| CO 895 | 6:45pm | 8:35pm | 3 |
| **Saipan-Seoul** | | | |
| OZ 604 | 2:10am | 6:00am | 1 |
| OZ 604 | 2:40am | 6:30am | 2,3,4,5,6,7 |
| OZ 606 | 3:30pm | 7:00pm | 2,4,6,7 |
| **Saipan-Busan** | | | |
| OZ 608 | 4:00am | 7:35am | 1,4,5,7 |
| **Saipan-Guanzhou** | | | |
| CZ 3008 | 5:00am | 8:00am | 2,6 |
| **Saipan-Shanghai** | | | |
| MU 590 | 4:20am | 7:00am | 2,6 |
| **Guam-Manila** | | | |
| CO 891 | 6:00am | 10:30am | 3 via Yap and Koror |
| CO 893 | 6:30am | 8:05am | 6 |
| CO 893 | 8:25am | 10:00am | 2,7 |
| CO 893 | 5:50pm | 9:10pm | 5 via Koror |
| CO 933 | 8:00pm | 9:40pm | Daily |
| PR 111 | 6:00am | 7:45am | 1,2,4,6,7 |
| **Guam-Hongkong** | | | |
| CO 909 | 7:45pm | 10:40pm | 1,5 |
| **Guam-Rota** | | | |
| CO 9598 | 10:15am | 10:45am | 1,2,6 |

### ARRIVALS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Rota-Saipan** | | | |
| CO 9598 | 11:10am | 11:45am | 1,2,6 |
| **Guam-Saipan** | | | |
| CO 9316 | 2:30am | 3:20am | Daily |
| CO9596 | 7:00am | 7:50am | Daily |
| CO9598 | 10:15am | 11:45am | 1,2,6 via Rota |
| CO9600 | 10:45am | 11:35am | 3,4,5,7 |
| CO9602 | 2:00pm | 2:50pm | Daily |
| CO9604 | 5:00pm | 5:50pm | Daily |
| CO9606 | 8:00pm | 8:50pm | Daily |
| **Narita-Saipan** | | | |
| NW 076 | 10:35am | 3:05pm | Daily |
| NW 077 | 6:15pm | 1:10am+1 | Daily via Nagoya |
| **Osaka-Saipan** | | | |
| NW 084 | 10:40am | 3:10pm | Daily |
| **Nagoya-Saipan** | | | |
| NW 077 | 8:45pm | 1:10am+1 | Daily |
| **Manila-Saipan** | | | |
| CO 890 | 9:15am | 2:55pm | 6 |
| CO 890 | 11:45am | 5:35pm | 3 |
| **Seoul-Saipan** | | | |
| OZ 605 | 9:00am | 2:30pm | 2,4,6,7 |
| OZ 603 | 7:40pm | 1:00am+1 | 7 |
| OZ 603 | 8:10pm | 1:30am+1 | 1,2,3,4,5,6 |
| **Busan-Saipan** | | | |
| OZ 607 | 9:30pm | 2:50am+1 | 3,4,6,7 |
| **Guanzhou-Saipan** | | | |
| CZ 3007 | 8:00pm | 4:00am+1 | 1,5 |
| **Shanghai-Saipan** | | | |
| MU 589 | 8:05pm | 3:00am+1 | 1,5 |
| **Manila-Guam** | | | |
| CO 894 | 11:20am | 4:55pm | 2,7 |
| CO 894 | 7:45pm | 1:20am+1 | 6 |
| CO 892 | 9:45pm | 5:25am+1 | 3 via Koror |
| CO 892 | 9:45pm | 6:30am+1 | 3 via Koror and Yap |
| CO 892 | 10:10pm | 5:30am+1 | 5 via Koror |
| CO 934 | 11:10pm | 4:40am+1 | Daily |
| PR 110 | 10:15pm | 4:00am+1 | 1,3,5,6,7 |
| **Hongkong-Guam** | | | |
| CO 910 | 11:40pm | 6:20am+1 | 1,5 |
| **Rota-Guam** | | | |
| CO 9313 | 9:30am | 10:00am | 3,4,7 |

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

## FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

| Airline | ETD | ETA | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Guam-Rota** | | | |
| FRE 100 | 7:00am | 7:30am | Daily |
| **Rota-Saipan** | | | |
| FRE 100 | 7:50am | 8:20am | Daily |
| **Saipan-Rota** | | | |
| FRE 200 | 9:00am | 9:30am | Daily |
| **Rota-Guam** | | | |
| FRE 200 | 9:50am | 10:15am | Daily |
| **Guam-Rota** | | | |
| FRE 300 | 4:00pm | 4:30pm | Daily |
| **Rota-Saipan** | | | |
| FRE 300 | 4:50pm | 5:25pm | Daily |
| **Saipan-Rota** | | | |
| FRE 400 | 6:00pm | 6:30pm | Daily |
| **Rota-Guam** | | | |
| FRE 400 | 6:45pm | 7:15pm | Daily |
| **Saipan-Tinian** | | | |
| FRE 101 | 6:45am | 6:55am | Daily |
| FRE 103 | 7:30am | 7:40am | Daily |
| FRE 105 | 8:00am | 8:10am | Daily |
| FRE 107 | 8:40am | 8:50am | Daily |
| FRE 109* | 9:10am | 9:20am | Daily |
| FRE 111* | 10:45am | 10:55am | Daily |
| FRE 113 | 11:40am | 11:50am | Daily |
| FRE 115 | 1:00pm | 1:10pm | Daily |
| FRE 117 | 2:30pm | 2:40pm | Daily |
| FRE 119 | 4:00pm | 4:10pm | Daily |
| FRE 121 | 4:40pm | 4:50pm | Daily |
| FRE 123 * | 5:40pm | 5:50pm | Daily |
| FRE 125 * | 6:00pm | 6:10pm | Daily |
| **Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**** | | | |
| FRE 102 | 7:05am | 7:15am | Daily |
| FRE 104 | 7:50am | 8:00am | Daily |
| FRE 106** | 8:20am | 8:30am | Daily |
| FRE 108** | 9:00am | 9:10am | Daily |
| FRE 110 | 10:00am | 10:10am | Daily |
| FRE 112 | 11:05am | 11:15am | Daily |
| FRE 114 | 12:00pm | 12:10pm | Daily |
| FRE 116 | 1:30pm | 1:40pm | Daily |
| FRE 118 | 2:50pm | 3:00pm | Daily |
| FRE 120** | 4:20pm | 4:30pm | Daily |
| FRE 122** | 5:00pm | 5:10pm | Daily |
| FRE 124 | 6:05pm | 6:15pm | Daily |
| FRE 126 | 6:20pm | 6:30pm | Daily |

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## Stretch Your Dollars With These Savings! Starts February 22 to March 2, 2008

Fruitone Bar Soap 3oz. 3for $1.00
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Scouring Pads 20pk. 2for $2.50
Mellita 8-12 Cup Coffee Filter 2for $3.50
Melamine Dinner Plate 30cm $1.25
Melamine Salad Bowl $1.00
Elastic Band with Pin $1.00
Plastic Pitcher 80oz. $2.50
AERO Plastic Pitcher 2qrt. $1.50
Flocked Air Bed Single $18.00
Good Cook Measuring Spoon 4 ct. $1.00
Polystone Rose Design Photo Frame $1.00
Flexible Flashlights $2.00
Buttons For Shirts $1.00

Toothbrush 5+5 **75¢**

Sentinel Cosmetic Fluff 100's **$1.25**

WF Mouth Rinse 1 Liter **$3.00**

Agree Shampoo or Conditioner 15.40z. **$1.50**

White Rain Shampoo or Conditioner 13.9oz. **$1.75**

Full Lenght Mirror 100cmx30cm **$8.00**

Plastic Hangers 8/pack **$1.50**

Clothes Pegs 48ct. **$2.00**

Pillow Protector **75¢**

Shower Curtain with Ring Set **$3.00**

Step Ladder **$18.00**

Wall Clock **$10.00**

Nylon Overnite Bag **$4.50**

Certificate Frames 30x21 **$2.50**

Mellenium Comfort Grip Flashlight **$5.00**

Bowl 6.25 inch **$1.00**

Lantern with Heavy Duty Battery **$7.50**

Ironing Board **$28.00**

Brass Padlock 5mm **$1.25**

Steak Knife 4pc. Set **$3.50**

Aluminum Tea Kettle **$8.00**

Nail Care Assortment **$1.00**

Self Adhesive Mirror 45cmx30cm **$4.00**

UBL Paring Knives **$1.00**

Cutlery Set 4pc. **$1.00**

Classic Clean Gloves **75¢**

Playtex Hand Saver Gloves **$2.00**

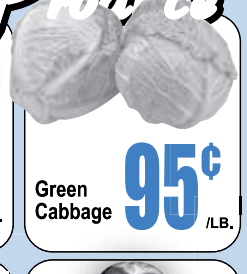
Director's Chair **$19.00**

Toilet Countor Rug 50x50cm **$2.00**

## Look for these and more great savings throughout our store!

## U.S. Produce

Cello Lettuce $1.59 /PC.

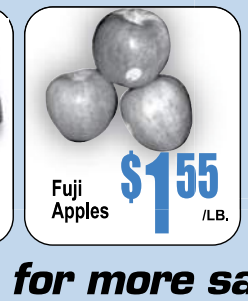


Green Cabbage 95¢ /LB.

Round Tomatoes $1.6 /Lb.

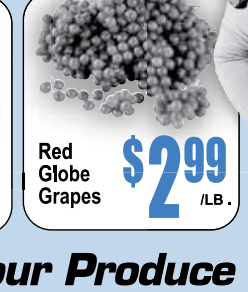
9 Roma Tomatoes $1.49 /Lb..

Kiwifruit $2.19 /Lb.



Fuji Apples $1.55 /LB.

Baby Carrots $1.49 /BG.



Red Globe Grapes $2.99 /LB .

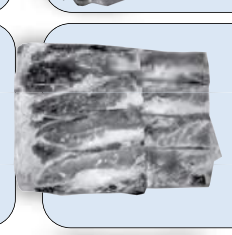
Visit us for more savings at our Produce section.

## Supermarket

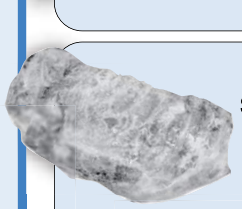
New Zealand Boneless Beef Chuck $1.99

New Zealand Beef For Stew Family Bag 7lb. $14.99

Chicken Leg Quarter 22lb./case $16.99 /cs.



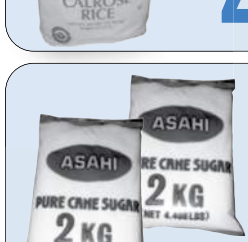
US Pork Spareribs 20lbs./case $14.99 /cs.



US Pork Spareribs 30lbs./case $19.99 /cs.

Diamond G Calrose Rice 50lb. $20.99 /bg.

Kikkoman Soy Sauce1.6 ltr. $3.99 /ea.



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Mileage: 41649
$14,999

USED CARS

| STOCK | YEAR | MODEL | TRANS. | MILEAGE | COLOR | LICENSE # | PRICE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TOYOTA SEDANS** | | | | | | | |
| R07-025F | 2004 | CAMRY LE 4DR | AUTO | 43820 | BEIGE | ACC-860 | 13,999 |
| R07-016F | 2005 | MATRIX | AUTO | 19890 | GRAY | ABV-759 | 11,299 |
| **GM CARS** | | | | | | | |
| U07-123P | 2006 | AVEO 4DR. | AUTO | 9500 | GRAY | ACE-688 | 8,999 |
| R07-031F | 2005 | AVEO 4DR. | AUTO | 68515 | YELLOW | ABY-169 | 8,999 |
| R07-035F | 2005 | AVEO 4DR. | AUTO | 63367 | WHITE | ACD-026 | 8,699 |
| R07-013F | 2005 | AVEO HATCHBACK | AUTO | 39164 | ORANGE | ADO-022 | 7,899 |
| R07-023F | 2005 | AVEO HATCHBACK | AUTO | 32635 | WHITE | ABX-679 | 9,599 |
| R07-034F | 2005 | OPTRA 4DR. | AUTO | 14592 | SILVER | ACD-020 | 10,999 |
| U07-075R | 2005 | EPICA 4DR. | AUTO | 10098 | BEIGE | ACA-204 | 8,999 |
| **TOYOTA TRUCKS** | | | | | | | |
| R07-036B | 2003 | TACOMA 4X4 D/CAB | AUTO | 85270 | RED | ABR-739 | 15,999 |
| R07-038F | 2004 | TACOMA 4X4 XTRACAB | AUTO | 49609 | BEIGE | ABV-159 | 11,899 |
| **OTHER CARS & TRUCKS** | | | | | | | |
| U08-007P | 2005 | HYUNDAI SANTA FE 4DR. | AUTO | 48717 | BLACK | ACE-248 | 11,599 |
| U07-106P | 2004 | HONDA CIVIC DX DR. | AUTO | 50416 | SILVER | ADF-401 | 8,999 |
| U07-107P | 2004 | HONDA CIVIC DX DR. | AUTO | 48755 | SILVER | ADF-421 | 8,999 |
| U07-108P | 2004 | HONDA CIVIC DX DR. | AUTO | 45099 | SILVER | ADF-431 | 8,999 |
| U07-109P | 2004 | HONDA CIVIC DX DR. | AUTO | 43869 | SILVER | ADF-371 | 8,999 |
| U07-034T | 2000 | NISSAN MAXIMA GXE 4DR. | AUTO | 68648 | WHITE | ACT-812 | 8,399 |
| U07-104T | 2003 | NISSAN MURANO SE | AUTO | 32000 | PEWT | ABZ-615 | 16,799 |
| U07-095T | 1999 | MAZDA MILLENIA 4DR. SEDAN | AUTO | 91014 | SILVER | ABP-583 | 7,999 |
| U07-118T | 2004 | MAZDA MX3 4DR. SEDAN | AUTO | 33366 | SILVER | ADH-312 | 12,799 |
| CONSIGNMENT | 2001 | FORD ESCAPE | AUTO | 39530 | BLUE | ABW-458 | 10,899 |
| **VANS** | | | | | | | |
| U07-096T | 2000 | SIENNA XLE | AUTO | 92766 | GRAY | ACO-561 | 8,999 |
| R08-001F | 2004 | SIENNA LE | AUTO | 164483 | WHITE | ABY-567 | 12,999 |
| **SPORT UTILITY** | | | | | | | |
| U07-064T | 2001 | 4RUNNER 4WD | AUTO | 56882 | CHAMPAIGNE | ABY-153 | 13,599 |
| U07-050T | 2002 | RAV4 4DR. 4WD | AUTO | 39182 | WHITE | ABW-677 | 12,799 |
| U07-082P | 2004 | RAV4 4DR. 2WD | AUTO | 68919 | GRAY | | 13,599 |

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| 2x4x14 | $5.50/Pc | $4.30/Pc |
| 2x4x16 | $6.10/Pc | $5.75/Pc |
| 2x4x18 | $6.90/Pc | $6.30/Pc |
| 2x4x20 | $7.40/Pc | $6.90/Pc |

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$8.80 Nicbond, 55lbs/bag

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Roof tin 15% off
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## Letter to the Editor

# Exploring geothermal energy for the CNMI: Getting power from it to you

In my last letter, we looked briefly at the cost factors involved in initializing a geothermal power plant and the length of time required to bring it on line. This time, I'd like to look at what happens IF we actually find a suitable geothermal source AND actually develop it to produce power. If the Governor's proposal for a Northern Island site eventually is realized, how do we get that power from there to here? Can it even be done?

**Can it be done?** Well, the simple answer is, yes, it can be done. But then, almost anything can be done in today's world of engineering marvels. The problem only arises when one asks the questions: has it been done before, how much does it cost and who will pay for it. So the answer is not quite so simple after all.

It turns out, through a little research, that it HAS been done – only once so far (in a manner comparable to what would be required in the CNMI). In 2005, Seimens, a giant power equipment contractor, developed and installed the only (so far) undersea electric power cable that carries at least 100 megawatts of power over a distance of about 180 miles. That cable runs between Tasmania (an island off the south coast of Australia) to Victoria, on the Southern coast of Australia. It is considered the template by which all others will design, for the foreseeable future. The cable took 3 years to design and install and is roughly the same distance as from Pagan Island to Saipan. See http://tdworld.com/news/ . It is interesting to note that a cable some 650 miles long, along the northwest coast of the U.S. is in the planning stages – but is having almost insurmountable problems – so far; estimated cost: over 2 BILLION dollars.

As with ALL undersea cables carrying electricity, it must carry ONLY DC (direct current) power, not the normal AC (alternating current) power used in our homes and businesses. This is because AC current traveling through such an undersea cable creates a rather gigantic electromagnetic field around itself – and this is extremely harmful to the environment and sea-life in proximity to the cable. In fact it may harm whales and other mammals many miles from its source and also interferes with underwater navigation and communications. The cable is called an HVDC cable and the environmental impact assessments are arduous and time consuming. Even the DC cable, after two years of operation, is showing huge problems by causing "ionization" and overheating along its length resulting in severe corrosive problems in the water basin it traverses and able to carry less than one-half its design load. This, in turn, has resulted in a huge electricity shortage in its proposed service area.

The cable also requires the installation of massive equipment at both ends. The equipment consists of such things as power converter valves, converter transformers, smoothing reactors, HV switching stations and communication and control technology. None of this equipment is very environment friendly.

> The CNMI government certainly doesn't have that kind of money, and has little prospect of being able to borrow it. Enter the IPP; complete with its 44 per cent greater cost to the consumer. But what IPP would invest such a huge amount for such a small service market? In order to collect a reasonable return on investment, the IPP would have to set a consumer cost at over 50 cents per KwH!

**What will it cost us?** Well OK, we've established that it can be done. So how much will it cost? That 180 mile HVDC cable in Australia cost about $450 MILLION dollars. And that is well within the range estimated for any undersea cable with the same capabilities. That cost, amortized over thirty or so years translates to a cost of power distribution to the public of about 20 cents per KwH! Oops! I think we may have just crossed the threshold between viability and folly. This cost factor cannot be avoided, but is it worthwhile? Who will pay?

The CNMI government certainly doesn't have that kind of money, and has little prospect of being able to borrow it. Enter the IPP; complete with its 44 per cent greater cost to the consumer. But what IPP would invest such a huge amount for such a small service market? In order to collect a reasonable return on investment, the IPP would have to set a consumer cost at over 50 cents per KwH! Sound familiar? That billion-

*See EXPLORING on next page*

## Letter to the Editor

# In defense of Ms. Warfield

I, for one, commend Ms. Rebecca Warfield for doing an exemplary job as head of DPS, especially when faced with significant departmental fiscal constraints, as well as a variety of political challenges. She has demonstrated good leadership qualities, integrity, and management skills.

As for after-hour activities, last time I checked, happy hour was advertised in nearly every hotel and bar on island. Is it considered illegal or unethical to have a drink after one is done with work? If that were the case, there are many on island guilty of such an offense, quite possibly some legislators included. Nay, one should not be casting stones.

This, indeed, has the appearance of a character assassination rather than anything of real substance. The charges leveled at Ms. Warfield seem baseless, particularly in light of known widespread corruption on island. Perhaps critics of Ms. Warfield would better use their time to seek condemnation of those individuals involved in cases of real corruption and financial self enrichment, already adequately supplied by the Office of Public Auditor.

If Ms. Warfield were using her position to commit fraud, if she were drunk on duty, if she were, say, hiring ghost employees for the purpose of self-enrichment, if she were found to be involved in nepotism or other such schemes, then I say she should be removed from office. However, her record appears to be clean of such misdeeds.

I overheard several folks talking about the condemnation of Ms. Warfield. They concluded that the charges seemed unfounded and that there appeared to be a move to oust her from her position in order to replace her with a connected friend or family member. Of this conclusion I strongly disagree. I simply cannot believe that any elected official would stoop to such deviousness.

On a lighter note, however, I am glad that our elected officials are bringing island issues to the public's attention. I applaud and encourage our leaders to be more open and transparent regarding all bills, island issues, legislative discussions, and cases of corruption...and spend less time airing out frivolous personnel conflicts.

Regarding Ms. Warfield I ask that the Governor not remove a competent official who has a proven history of honest performance and quality leadership. There are enough problems on island...let's not make problems where none exist.

Speaking of other problems, my heart goes out to the Malite family for all they have suffered. And I commend them for speaking out and making clear their position. I am gratified that the Malite family came out in support of Judge Govendo and Steve Nutting, both of whom have seen fit to do the right thing and are working to protect the estate. One needn't rehash the outrageous facts in this case; the facts have been presented and speak for themselves.

I despise corruption at any level, but it's particularly loathsome when it leads to those officials who know better, but still take advantage of their elite position to steal from others (their own people) with impunity and without remorse. I am saddened for the Malite heirs for what they have been through. Should the heirs need an impartial and honest administrator for their estate, I offer my services... for free. It's long past time we should be helping each other in our community. I, for one, am fed up with the corruption.

**Bill Weiss**
*Puerto Rico*

## EXPLORING

*From Page 14*

dollar wind farm was going to result in about the same figure. Now we can also see why Verizon wanted to hold onto its half billion dollar undersea communications cable between Saipan and Guam!

Add it up: Geothermal developmental costs of about 22 cents per KwH, O & M costs of about 2 cents per KwH and transmission costs of around 20 cents per KwH. Nobody is going to deliver that kind of electricity to you below their cost, so please quit dreaming of CHEAP electricity from geothermal in the CNMI!

**Conclusions:** Is geothermal a good power source? Absolutely! Is it a cheap source? Absolutely! (caveat: produced and used within the same locality) Is it politically correct? Absolutely! But will it deliver what the CNMI needs? At this point, I doubt it. A whole lot more needs to be done by the Governor's Office before we should even consider such an investment – and this work needs to be public and thorough and answer the questions that, as yet, apparently have not even been considered.

It is also interesting to note that many unforeseen problems have since arisen in that first-of-its-kind Australian "Basslink" cable that may push the cost of the installation to over 2 and a half BILLION dollars over the next 25 years. Can we afford that?

I am now convinced more than ever that a real solution is at hand; one that will deliver electricity in a reliable and safe manner to all homes and businesses at an economical cost of between 6 and 10 cents per KwH. It is available NOW, with little or no environmental impact and an installation time of about 2 to 3 years at a cost of around $1000/KW; and that solution is generation IV, passive, modular, nuclear power. So why are we still chasing the rainbows from silver bullets that are great for other places, but just don't fit what we have in the CNMI?

**Dr. Thomas D. Arkle Jr.**
*San Jose, Tinian*

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# McDonald's with no burgers and oil prices at $101: A CNMI reality check

**By RICKY DELGADO**
*Special to the Saipan Tribune*

*Ricky Delgado is the CEO and president of PTI.*

What would happen if McDonald's no longer could sell burgers, and only sold fries and drinks? What would happen if at the same time that they lost their ability to sell burgers, their cost of electricity tripled?

My friends, three very predictable things would happen to McDonald's: 1) They would lose at least half of their sales, as people like you and me who love Big Macs would stop going altogether, 2) Their costs of operating the store would shoot through the roof as it costs a lot of money to run their air conditioners, stoves, and lights, and 3) With their reduced customer base and higher cost, they would need to fire many of the employees to compensate for these two adverse conditions. In summary, McDonald's and its employees would be in for a world of hurt.

I am sure you know that the CNMI, now that the garment business is gone, is like McDonald's with no burgers. Please recall that that not too long ago, we had budgets of over $260 million, and now we are at $160 million. Some of that $100,000,000 that has evaporated desperately needs to be found before majority of government employees lose their jobs. To make matters worse, I am sure you also remember a time, in the recent past, when a barrel of oil was less than $20 per barrel, and now, as predicted, it has crossed over $101.

So our leaders and the voters of the CNMI face a few choices that finally need to be made: 1) We can either try to create new items on the menu that would fill the $100,000,000 void left by the garment industry, or we can let go of another 1,000 government employees, with the possibility of even more losing their jobs down the road.

2) With regards to our dreadful power situation, we can either finally privatize the CUC, which by some measures is producing power at double the rates they could be, or again, keep raising prices and in the process bankrupt all our citizens and companies. I have advocated many times in the past that it is unfair for the entire public to suffer because we do not have a Tokyo Electric, or Korean Electric Power company, or some other large utility professionally running the CUC. But my voice and that of others have fallen on deaf ears. And as usual, the tyranny of the special interest groups is slowly sucking the life out of the average Joe on the street.

3) What are the new things we can add to our menu? Well, why don't we look at what other island nations like us in the Caribbean have done? Their economies depended largely on sugar many decades ago. Sugar to them were like garments to us. When sugar prices collapsed and big countries like Brazil stated competing with them as China does with us in the garment business, they began a huge push for tourism and real estate development. Places like Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and the Bahamas, all opened their economies up to investors, real estate developers, and legitimate casino operators.

But for some reason, which is beyond comprehension of many, we are still tied to a belief that as Mcdonald's, we can somehow get by without our burgers, and without fixing our high cost of power. Eventually, as Al Gore once said, "A false belief bumps up against a harsh reality, with devastating results." But my friends, reality is setting in, and we need to decide once and for all what is more important: thousands of jobs and our collective quality of life, or hanging on to an old and flawed way of thinking that has brought us straight into the worse mess in our history.

So lets take a reality check. We no longer have the revenue from our burgers (garments). We have the highest power rates in the free world. And what have we been doing about the above? Sadly almost nothing.

We are still debating about Article XII, when our cousins who live in Guam now have homes that average a whopping $200,000, up 90 percent in value since 2002. As I have said all along, Article XII has hurt the average local big time, as it has restricted the number of buyers and sellers in the market, depressing prices, and forcing people into poverty. For proof, look at our cousins in Guam. By allowing an open market to function, they have an extra $90,000 in their pockets. Again, Article XII unwittingly removes from the equation the wealthy Japanese or Korean retiree who is willing to pay more for sunshine, clean air, and the island lifestyle. Your local neighbor already has all of the above, does not want your land, and probably does not have the money to even pay for it, much less pay what an outsider would be willing and able to pay.

Some people are worried about the entire islands being "sold" to foreigners. We know this is never going to happen because the CNMI is not the only place in the world competing for vacation homes. Moreover, if that is the fear and the reason why everything is on hold while our economy sinks into the Pacific Ocean, why don't we zone the land, just like every other modern country? Beachfront, mountain top, and other chosen tourist zones, fee simple. The rest, for 99-year leases. Singapore, which is much smaller than the CNMI and has three million residents, did exactly that, and by the way, none of their residents are fearful of losing their land because they are on average now the richest citizens in Asia. Why are we too proud to learn from the successful experiences of others?

Some people are worried about the entire islands being "sold" to foreigners. We know this is never going to happen because the CNMI is not the only place in the world competing for vacation homes.

So how does fee simple help our government's revenues? We could actually tax foreigners who avail of fee simple land to help with education and health for all locals concerned. Right now, no one pays real estate tax, and there is no reason why developers, foreigners, and investors should be exempt. This would add millions of dollars per year in tax revenues that we are not collecting now. So why are we going to wait four more years to debate this? By then, perhaps 2,000 people could be jobless and the CNMI could have descended into anarchy. Is this what we really want?

We are also still pussy footing about legitimate gaming for tourists when our islands are littered with poker halls. Why should we allow only locals to gamble and not the tourists who don't care if they lose a few thousand dollars? Why don't we give everyone the right to lose their money and leave it in the CNMI if they want to? Look at the entire Caribbean, they have gaming everywhere, but it is controlled and managed properly. You don't see Bahamians, Dominicans, or Jamaicans in the casinos, you see wealthy tourists entertaining themselves, leaving tons of money behind in local government coffers in the process. As many have said all along, either we have proper gaming or out of principle there should be no gaming whatsoever for anyone. Why discriminate? And as far as Tinian is concerned, why not share the revenues of whatever comes Saipan's way, so that everyone benefits? Why do we not want to grow the pie and understand that if the CNMI government benefits from greater collections, everybody wins, whether they are from Saipan, Tinian, or Rota?

And despite suffering from blackout after blackout, why are we still debating about whether we should privatize CUC? If we want lower rates, let's bring in a legitimate operator, ask them as part of their concession that they retrain some of our local workers and even employ them in their home operations to bring in some technology transfer. Ladies and gentlemen, a solid international operator could bring down your bills by 50 percent in time. Aren't you tired of overpaying for power?

But sadly, instead of focusing on what is necessary for our survival, we are still distracted by other "more important" mudslinging activities. We now have this to and fro in the papers of politicians and citizens insulting each other. We now have local organizations fighting other local groups to see who is the true voice of the local people, and have basically abandoned our basic and most important civic duty: How can we improve the standard of living in these islands, and give future generations a chance so they can grow up to live productive lives.

So, it is all of our responsibility, media included, to focus on the economy, and making the changes needed to avert further suffering. It would be a tremendous public service for our local papers to focus constantly on what our decision makers are doing to solve our $100,000,000 budget shortfall, and the disaster that is the CUC when oil trades at over $101 a barrel. That is what the papers should be writing about over and over again, because at the end, this is what matters for the CNMI's survival, not mean spirited attacks between our citizens.

But there is some hope, so please do not give up on yourselves or your leaders. The quick decision to extend the lease to Asiana is paying dividends, and your political leaders need to be congratulated for working fast and showing Asiana that we welcome them. Now, if you could also show them appreciation and approval for making such bold moves, perhaps they will not be so timid when it comes to other economic reform. Besides, with elections less than two years away, and many eying the top job, perhaps the newspapers and public could already begin asking the presumed candidates what they are doing right now to improve government revenues and fix the power crisis. We have no time to waste, and the sooner we get around to bringing up new things on the menu and bringing down our cost of electricity, the less of our government employees need to get thrown out on the street, stripping them of their dignity, and their ability to provide for their families.

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## Letters to the Editor

# Stop blaming PSS!

I have read many remarks from a variety of individuals in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands concerning Ms. Jeanne Rayphand's inquiry into the validity of having graduates of the public school system take the TOEFL test in order to be admitted to the Northern Marianas College.

In my view the question is valid. It would seem to me that the college would be willing to offer some proof that its position on this matter is sound. They have not. In fact, the current president of the college was masterful in her deflection of this issue to the Public School System. That has turned out to be pure genius because every letter to the editor I have read involves some sort attack on the PSS. Now, instead of appropriately addressing the original issue, the college merely sits back and watches the community attack the only CNMI educational institution that has a proven track record of progress. If only she could work that magic with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. But that's another story.

I arrived in the Commonwealth in September 1986. At that time many of the children at the high school level could literally neither read nor write. Though there have been many bumps, fits and starts, PSS has consistently made progress in bringing students the best education possible given the means afforded. They do this despite the apparent low priority given to public education in the CNMI. PSS has not enough teachers, over 11,000 students, practically no funding, and little support from the government. Yet it continually strives to raise the educational bar. PSS can and does provide proof of its accomplishments.

Oh, and by the way, when was the last time that a CNMI public school was in danger of loosing its accreditation? I may or may not agree with many issues at PSS, but I believe that instead of barking at PSS and the commissioner, the Commonwealth should be thanking him and his predecessor profusely for providing a quality education to our youth despite the many and varied obstacles.

As for NMC, the history of the college speaks for itself. It has constantly been warned by WASC. It now has a really fast talking president that clearly is more concerned with her own self-interest than in the concerns of the community. It generally has an enrollment of under a thousand students and a support staff as large as its teaching staff. It has embarked on many a questionable undertaking, e.g. the La Fiesta debacle. However, when confronted with an issue from the very community it is supposed to serve, the college responds with a bunch of amorphous, pseudo-academic nonsense, and attempts to deflect the issue from itself.

**John Davis**
*Fina Sisu, Saipan*

# NMC's shaky position: the real reasons?

This letter is a follow-up to an earlier letter I wrote concerning NMC: its accreditation issues and its need for open, transparent and competent leadership. Additionally I would like to respond to the *Tribune*'s Feb. 20 article, "NMC cites 2 possible reasons for its shaky position."

One reason cited was "increased pressure from the federal government." Basically the requirements of having to "show-cause" were simply enumerated. I did not sense that anything had really changed much, other than WASC is finally "putting its foot down."

Another reason discussed was the assessment of learning programs and learning outcomes. This area has routinely been neglected since 1990, and now presents itself as a high priority issue. According to NMC much has been accomplished in this area, including close attention by President Fernandez since her hire in May 2007. President Fernandez was also quoted in part as saying, "the government and the legislature must come to the aid of the college." No doubt NMC could use additional monies to repair and renovate the existing campus, though building a new one would not appear to be fiscally responsible at this time.

I wonder if there really isn't a bigger question in WASC's mind about the ineffective leadership and governance of NMC. Since the latter part of 2002 when NMC hired Ken Wright as its president, and up until now, the turnover of presidents, deans and other senior staff members has been huge. And the turnover of faculty even larger. Four presidents (and acting), all the vice presidents, close to a dozen deans (and acting), and dozens upon dozens of faculty members, and staff. Although most of this occurred before the arrival of Carmen Fernandez, there is continuing evidence that all is not open, transparent, and competent. Many who have talked to me since my first letter are waiting for disclosure on the resignation of Dean Wyatt. Some are even suggesting questionable, if not illegal, hiring and firing practices continue to this day at NMC.

Perhaps it is now time to review the use of nonrenewable, without-cause employment contracts at NMC (which are usually for two years in duration). The faculty for many years now have basically been contract workers with the same limited horizons and assurances of the thousands upon thousands of factory workers who have come and gone. At an alarming rate the nonrenewable without-cause contracts now seem to be used to settle political disagreements, personal disputes and outright discrimination. How can a college achieve a collective culture and consciousness that serves students, the community and the teaching professionals with such high rates of personnel turnover? We need to learn the truth about what is going on at NMC. Does anybody know? Will anybody say? What is there to hide?

And before I can get this to the newspapers, the Feb. 21 *Saipan Tribune* headline reads, "Furey resigns from NMC board." The paper reports that President Fernandez and Regents chair Joey San Nicholas both refused to comment on Furey's resignation. Was NMC once again shocked and dismayed? How is the communication between the Board and the president? How often do they talk with each other? Are the Board's wishes carried out? What's really happening at NMC? Won't somebody be open and honest with the community? We're waiting.

**Perry Conner**
*As Matuis, Saipan*

# Enough is enough

I will have no further media comment on allegations lodged by Rep. Stanley Torres. My children and husband are my first concern and the slanderous natures of his accusations are disgusting. My seven-year-old son saw the article regarding my "late night activities" and mentioned it to me. As I looked in his innocent eyes, I concluded that nothing Representative Torres has to say is more important than the preservation of my family. Enough is enough.

Stanley Torres maintains that his attacks are "nothing personal." However, the subject matter and innuendo suggest otherwise. Charges of alcoholism and sexual impropriety are personal. Attempts to respond in a professional and respectful manner only further the attacks. I will no longer engage in the irrational. While there is no apparent legal avenue for me to stop Stanley Torres, I will no participate in his efforts to humiliate and degrade me.

**Rebecca M. Warfield**
*DPS Commissioner*

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# Palau: A trip that's 45 years in the making

By JEFFREY GROBERMAN
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

***Editor's Note:*** *Jeffrey Groberman is a travel feature writer based in Vancouver. He has been to Saipan several times during his travels in Micronesia. The following story was published in major papers across Canada two years ago as part of a series Groberman wrote on "Islands in the Sun" and he is making it available to the* Saipan Tribune.

I've always wanted to go Micronesia since I was 12 and saw pictures of wrecked World War II Japanese Zeros and topless women in a copy of *National Geographic*. It's only taken me about 45 years to get there.

Micronesia is a series of tropical islands in the North Pacific, a spit away from the equator, and a hop away from the Philippines. Palau, along with Yap, was one of the islands I'd be visiting. Technically speaking, Palau isn't part of Micronesia: In 1978 it withdrew and became an independent republic despite the fact that the entire population would into fit into a good size hockey arena.

Up until a few weeks ago probably less than one in a thousand people had ever heard of Palau. But that's changed now that the *Survivor* television series has set their current series there. I recently went there with my 27-year-old son, Elan. Besides hosting *Survivor*, Palau is considered one of the top five destinations in the world, which is why I happened to be there as part of a father/son dive trip

Now at this point you are probably assuming that I am a competent diver: Nothing could be farther from the truth—I'm as incompetent as they come. Most divers can make a tank of air last more than an hour. My personal best is about 15 minutes. The thought of being trapped underwater with a limited supply of air, and being reduced to number two on the food chain tends to make me hyperventilate and it's difficult to breathe into a paper bag underwater.

It came as a bit of a surprise to find that the island was teeming with surly TV production people when we arrived. There may only be 14 or so "survivors" on the beach, but behind them is a crew of over a 100 which tended to make its presence known in every aspect of life on Palau. Certain areas of Palau were being guarded more zealously than *Dr. No's* Island. It appeared that many dive sites and other tourist areas were out of bounds for both the locals and tourists alike. It wouldn't do to have a tour of 60 Japanese tourists marching across the beach, or a fleet of diving boats cluttering up the shots.

I found that on this particular part of our trip, life began to imitate art. We had our own mini-*Survivor* series going on, complete with challenges and rewards. On checking in with Sam's Tours who provided our diving and kayak tours, we found that we were assigned to the same group of people for four days. It became instantly apparent that there were two tribes: Our tribe that consisted of me, my son Elan, and Josh, a U.S. Navy officer about the same age as Elan and the other team we nicknamed the Flanders after Homer Simpson's cloyingly cheerful neighbor. The Flanders were a family of five from Utah, consisting of three teenage boys, a dad and a manic mom who herded them around like a mother hen on crack cocaine.

You could say that they were infectiously cheerful—infectious like athlete's foot. There were lots of hopping up and down, hollering, and family high fives.

**IF YOU GO:**

**If you want an out of the way tropical island with outstanding diving, snorkeling and kayaking, then consider Palau. I booked the trip through Micronesian Divers Association www.mdaguam.com. The cost of the package for five days in Palau and four days in Yap including airfare to and from Guam, hotels, breakfasts, diving, and transfers was approximately $1,600. I found the cost of the package far less than trying to book all the elements online. Palau is served by Continental Micronesia twice a week with a 737 aircraft.**

The Flanders were on a quest: They wanted to catalogue the entire ocean and they scurried from here to there checking off each item.

"Wow, a white tip shark!" one shouted.

"Where?" yelled another.

"Over here," the first responds.

And the remaining Flanders make a bee line over, elbowing out of the way anyone in their path.

"That's the sixth one today! Family High Five!!"

The strange thing is that nobody, and I mean nobody, ever saw these things! Now I realize I can't be relied on as a qualified observer, since most of my time was spent watching my ever rapidly decreasing air supply, the elusive dive master, and the back of my son's fins.

I kept Elan in front of me at all times as a buffer in case we actually ever came face to face with a shark. After all I did have a spare kid back home, but there's only one of me. But neither Elan, Josh or the dive master saw these mythical fish, which of course, led us to "the game."

When we were snorkeling, Josh, Elan or I would cry out to one of the others: "Look, look! Shark!" And of course all five Flanders would come scurrying for a look see.

"No, no, it's over here!" One of us would shout from across the bay, "And there's not one; there's two!"

And of course the Flanders would head off in the other direction. They never seemed to tire of this game. The closest I ever saw them to having an argument is whether our sightings should count in their totals.

One of the most incredible sights on Palau is Jelly Fish Lake. It's worth the trip to Palau alone where you can swim in and among millions of jellyfish. Jelly Fish Lake is a salt water lake that has been isolated from the ocean for thousands of years. Because the jellyfish have had no predators for thousands of years they have lost their ability to sting, so there is no problem swimming with them. Looking into the lake was like looking up at the night sky in a very dark place and seeing countless stars.

One has to take a short rocky hike up a hill, then down again to get to the lake. Once there you don your mask and fins and swim to the far end of the lake where the jellyfish congregate. It truly is amazing. I thought the Flanders would have a collective heart attack trying to count them all.

On the way back to the boat from the lake we ran into a large tour of Japanese tourists. I impressed them with my command of the Japanese language saying "good afternoon," "excuse me" and "thank you" in Japanese. They all seemed impressed and I was quite pleased with myself until Elan informed me that they were from Taiwan!

On our last day, Sam's Tour's took a page from *Survivor* and decided to shake up our tribes a bit for the kayak tour by adding another couple: An ophthalmologist from the Midwest and his California valley girl wife. I wanted to take the German Light House Kayak Tour but all but one tour had been cancelled as they were filming in those locations and it would ruin the illusion if a bunch of kayaks floated through every 10 minutes. I can only imagine what would happen if one of those groups happened to contain the Flanders.

So the only option was the "Tarzan Tour"—something that appeared a little too rigorous for me, considering I had about 25 years on the next closest person. I said I'd prefer a "Jane" tour if they had one, but given no alternative I would go along with the majority. We were delegated a double kayak and Elan spent the rest of the day looking at the back of my head and criticizing my paddling form.

The kayak trip consisted of about four 30 – 40 minute kayak trips to different Islands and lagoons with about an hour stop at each place for snorkeling. At the first snorkeling stop I could swear I heard a 9-year-old girl squealing and shrieking. The noise was emanating from the ophthalmologist's Valley Girl Wife.

Now I've heard "low talkers", and "fast talkers" but this was a first: a grown woman who sounds exactly like an excited 9-year-old girl! And if that wasn't bad enough, they were bonding with the Flanders!

At the lunch break, I stayed behind with the kayaks and the guides while the Josh and Elan went snorkeling on one side of the bay, and the Flanders and their new tribe members went to the other.

It was beautifully idyllic, except for the racket coming from the Flanders side of the bay. It took me a few minutes to figure out that the valley girl and the Flanders were actually communicating underwater through their snorkels—like mutant dolphins talking "twin" talk. The guides' jaws dropped in stunned amazement.

On the last leg of our voyage to "lost lake" we had a monsoon. It just pelted rain, but given that the air, ocean and rain temperatures were all in the 80 deg F range it wasn't that uncomfortable. At Lost Lake, we put on our snorkeling gear and I poked around the reefs by myself for a while, and when I looked around everyone had disappeared! Obviously it wasn't the lake that was "lost" it was me! Eventually the guide showed up and took me through the underwater entrance to a little, totally enclosed lagoon.

The *Survivor* crew was very tight lipped about talking about anything. If I said "good morning" to any of them, they made me sign a release before they'd answer, so I can't give you any insights into who will win *Survivor Palau*.

I don't care as long as it's not the Flanders.

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# 'Saipan's salty water good for shrimp growing'

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The abundance of in-land salt water on Saipan has become a source of strength for Saipan SyAqua Aquaculture.

This was according to operations manager Rommel G. Catalma, who said the island's salty in-land water is actually perfect for the company's shrimp growing operation.

"Anywhere you dig on Saipan, you get salt water. Normally shrimp farms get water from the ocean, which is not very secure considering the virus that could be present. And if you get it from digging deep on land, you're very sure that it would be fresh water. On Saipan, you get deep well water that is salty—that's the main advantage," he said.

Saipan SyAqua grows Pacific white shrimp (Pennaeus Vannamei) at its China Town farm.

Catalma added that aside from salt water readily within reach, the island has also become an ideal place to grow shrimps because of its proximity to the main shrimp markets of Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia.

"Our advantage is the major market of broodstock is Southeast Asia and we're closer to Southeast Asia than Hawaii."

Catalma said in an earlier interview that aside from the CNMI, Hawaii is the only locale allowed to export broodstock shrimp anywhere in the world.

"[Compared to Hawaii] shipping is cheaper and the length of travel for broodstocks are shorter, so the mortality rate will be lessened," he added.

Japan and Korea, meanwhile, are the main consumers of shrimp in this part of the world.

This past Lunar New Year, orders from hotels and restaurants once again flooded Saipan SyAqua and the company had to work double-time to keep up with demand.

"The biggest individual buyers have been Hyatt [Regency Saipan] and Aqua Resort [Club]. However, if you combine all the sales, the biggest buyers are the Chinese restaurants. They seem to be more concerned about the quality of shrimp. Fresh shrimp is really different from the frozen ones that can be bought at supermarkets here."

Among Saipan SyAqua's future plans is expanding its operations to include the processing of chipped shrimp for distribution to local supermarkets and to countries in the region, according to Catalma.

Last Dec. 27, the local shrimp grower exported 125 pairs of broodstocks—or parent shrimps—to one of the biggest shrimp hatcheries in Indonesia last December.

Saipan SyAqua exported 250 pieces (125 male and 125 female) of 10-month-old broodstocks at $25 per piece, exclusive of freight and packaging cost, which the buyer had to pay. The lone transaction easily netted the company $6,250.

Saipan SyAqua uses a three-phase system to grow its shrimps. In one raceway, the farm has three tanks—nursery, intermediate, and final tanks. At any given time, it has three cultures going on so that in a year, one raceway can harvest at least five times. At any given time, the farm has 500,000 shrimps.

Catalma said the company plans to increase that by three fold in a couple of years to 1.5 million shrimps. Currently, production is around 3,000-4,000 lbs. a month and increasing.

Last year, the company also began selling their shrimp at Sabalu Market, which has been such a huge success that their supplies usually run out before noon.

Saipan SyAqua employs two aquaculturists, a chemist, a sales and delivery person, and two aquaculture aides. The company also has the support of the entire sales force of Saipan Ice and Water Company and all of its support services for its electrical and mechanical needs.

MARK RABAGO
Saipan SyAqua Aquaculture operations manager Rommel G. Catalma poses inside the company's shrimp farm in China Town.

A view of Saipan SyAqua Aquaculture's shrimp farm facility in China Town. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Advanced happy birthday greetings to Rosalie Yamagishi, who will be celebrating her birthday tomorrow, Feb. 22, 2008. From your loving girls Rota, Riri, Riana, and your husband.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Birthday greetings go out to Ardith Rivera, who is celebrating her birthday today, Feb. 22, 2008. "May God bless you on your special day and may you celebrate this day with an outpouring of love and happiness." From your son Carlos and the familia.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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# Green Meadow's math whizzes shine in Math Court

Green Meadow School students acquitted themselves well during the last Math Court competition held at the Kagman Elementary School on Feb. 16, 2008. The following are the names of students who earned honor for their school due to their outstanding performances:

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Green Meadow School students pose with their teachers/coaches after the last Math Court competition held at the Kagman Elementary School on Feb. 16, 2008.

## MEASUREMENT/ GEOMETRY

**Kinder – 5**
Second Place
- Arvin Dayao
- Ian Willard Ranin

**First Grade**
First Place
- Angel Sean Legaspi
Second Place
- Pionnah Rosej Gregorio
- Danielle Pineda

**Second Grade**
Third Place
- Jolo Miko Berueco
Fourth Place
- Kathleen Trinidad

**Third Grade**
First Place
- Danielle Coloma

## DATA/ STATISTICS/ PROBABILITY

**Kinder – 5**
Third Place
- Alexandra Belle Dalusung
- Gabriel Roy De Leon

**First Grade**
First Place
- Angel Sean Legaspi
Third Place
- Kyle Christopher Bautista
Fourth Place
- Jeremiah Joel Fernandez
- Robin Matthew Reyes

**Second Grade**
Second Place
- Jolo Miko Berueco
- Amelito Dalusong Jr.
Third Place
- Keandre Deseo
- Dayne Suba

**Third Grade**
Third Place
- Gene Rei De Leon
- Kaela Valencia

**Coaches:**
- Ms. Sony Natividad
- Ms. Mileth Castillo

## PGFC RESULTS

Students of the Green Meadow School also did well during the PGFC competition held Feb. 2, 2008, at the Kagman Elementary School. Here is the list of winners:

**3-5 Divison:**
1st Place: R.F.M.D. – Kaela Mae Valencia
2nd Place: R.F.M.C. – Danielle Coloma
3rd Place: D.I.A – Ma. Theresa Dalusong
3rd Place: H.I. – Ma. Theresa Dalusong
5th Place: Duo B – Ian Lemuel Elnas and Gene Rei De Leon

**K-2 Division:**
1st Place: R.F.M.C. – Amelito Dalusong Jr.
1st Place: R.F.B. – Jerique Dayne Suba
2nd Place: R.F.M. B. – Jeremiah Fernandez
2nd Place: Choral Speaking B
1. Jolo Miko Berueco
2. Prudencio Cabrera
3. Keandre Phillip Deseo
4. Bert Gabriel Magallano
5. Joshua Christian Saturno
2nd Place: H.I.A. – Keandre Phillip Deseo
3rd Place: D.I. – Bert Magallano
3rd Place: R.F.A. – Monica Aira Usi
4th Place: H.I.B. – Danielle Pineda
4th Place: Choral Speaking C
1. Kyle Bautista
2. Jeremiah Fernandez
3. Angel Sean Legaspi
4. Robin Matthew Reyes
5. Raymond Towai

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students of the Green Meadow School pose with their teachers after the PGFC competition held Feb. 2, 2008, at the Kagman Elementary School.

4th Place: Choral Speaking B
1. Jeremiah Borromeo
2. Kelly Acebo
3. Natalie Hirshbein
5th Place: R.F.M.C. – Franchesca Del Pilar
5th Place: Duo B
1. Clarice Calage
2. Patricia Sablan
5th Place: Choral Speaking C
1. Rownel Jody Coloma
2. Raven Daca
3. Elaine Joy Fernandez
4. Radge Vladimir Palma
5. Kathy Thomas
5th Place: Choral Speaking B
1. Mary Grace Briones
2. Chekaina Coloma
3. Jerique Dayne Suba
4. Kathleen Trinidad
5. Monica Aira Usi

## A-HONOR ROLL

Green Meadow School issued its A-Honor roll list for the second quarter of School Year 2007 – 2008.

**K – 3:**
1. Rayven Daca
2. Elaine Joy Fernandez
3. Radge Vladimir Palma

**K – 4:**
1. Jhanylin Cruz
2. Natalie Hirshbein
3. Claire Marzan
4. Mikee Mendoza

**K -5A:**
1. Alexandra Belle Dalusung
2. Arvin Dayao
3. Kimvherly Ann Dela Cruz
4. Gabriel Roy De Leon
5. Nehemiah Fernandez
6. Johara Ann Loyola
7. Isaiah Miguel Mallari
8. Rbjacob Malonzo
9. Angel Mae Oropesa
10. Trina Marie Rena
11. Deirdre Mae Rosete
12. Jerique Reineer Suba
13. Kiana Joyce Valencia
14. Romualdo Raul Villones

**K – 5B:**
1. Ronilo Paulo Cadag
2. Eliza Marie Casilla
3. Ardel Austin Ciolo
4. Angelo Rance Francisco
5. Mej Kristan Pascual
6. Aditya Rai
7. Ian Willard Ranin
8. Dustin Ross Salilin
9. Keona Claire Sigua

**First Grade:**
1. Andrea Monique Agtarap
2. Kyle Christopher Bautista
3. Franchesca Del Pilar
4. Ryan Louis Divino
5. Jeremiah Fernandez
6. Gabrielle Shanikka Flores
7. Pionah Rosej Gregorio
8. Angel Sean Legaspi
9. Jeramie Ann Loyola
10. Danielle Pineda
11. Keanno Stevinz Rabe
12. Robin Matthew Reyes
13. Tianna Thalia Villagomez
14. Anniea Sofia Zaturno

**Second Grade:**
1. Jolo Miko Berueco
2. Prudencio Raymond Cabrera
3. Chekaina Viel Coloma
4. Amelito Dalusong
5. Keandre Philip Deseo
6. Bert Gabriel Magallano
7. Joshua Christian Saturno
8. Jerique Dayne Suba
9. Kathleen Trinidad
10. Monica Aira Usi

**Third Grade:**
1. Danielle Coloma
2. Ma. Theresa Dalusong
3. Ian Lemuel Elnas
4. Rozelle Ann Loyola
5. Angel Marie Tan
6. Kaela Mae Valencia


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- 20% discount on drinks after happy hour at the Chambre Bar
- Above discounts good for up to 6 persons (including VIP cardholder)

# Pacific

## 3 fishing vessels caught in FSM waters

**POHNPEI, Federated States of Micronesia** (Kaselehlie Press/PIR)—Within the past month, three fishing vessels were arrested by FSM law enforcement officers for fishing violations in FSM waters.

On Feb. 12 the U.S. Coast Guard buoy tender *Sequoia* facilitated the boarding of the *Koshin Maru #31*, a Japanese long liner operating out of Guam.

On the 13th, the USCG cutter *Assateague* facilitated the boarding of another Japanese longliner *Koyo #8,* by FSM National Policeman Nicholas Raifmai.

Both vessels were licensed to fish in the FSM and were detained for fisheries violations. Neither vessel had switched on their Vessel Monitoring Systems as they are required to do when inside FSM waters. The VMS allows FSM National Police to monitor the movements of vessels fishing in the FSM Exclusive Economic Zone. Without it the fishing vessels are invisible to law enforcement officers unless they are visible by radar within a fairly short range. The *Koshin Maru* was apprehended in Yap waters north of Gaferut Island. The *Koyo* was apprehended a day later in waters East of Gaferut also in Yap waters and well inside the FSM's EEZ.

On Jan. 18, FSM National Police apprehended a Chinese flagged fishing vessel 40 nautical miles from Kapingamarangi Island. The vessel was approximately 100 nautical miles within the FSM's EEZ.

The FSM *Palikir* spotted the vessel on radar at 8:30am. Officers boarded the *Fu Yuan Yu 096* approximately 45 minutes later. The ship turned out to be an Illegal Unlicensed Unmonitored vessel unlicensed to fish in the FSM, the first that the FSM has encountered in many years according to Commander R. Maluweirang of the Police Maritime Wing.

Police reports said that the *Fu Yuan Yu 096* when boarded had shark fishing gear laid out on the stern (the rear) of the boat "characteristic of a vessel making ready to set a long line." Many other fisheries violations were noted by the National Police when they boarded the vessel.

The vessel was carrying fishing gear typically used for catching sharks. Officers found that the long liner's catch included a significant number of finned shark bodies and shark fins. It is illegal to fish for sharks in the FSM. Several other species of fish were also found in their freezers. According to an FSM National Police Press Release some of the catch was still bloody, soft and pliable to the touch indicating that they had only recently been caught.

## Malaria top killer in Solomons province

**PORT MORESBY, Papua** New Guinea (The National/PIR)—Malaria remains the No.1 killer disease in New Ireland and other parts of the country but more money and manpower are instead being put into HIV/AIDS with little success rating.

This was the message to foreign development partners by the member for Namatanai and shadow Minister for Internal Affairs, Culture and Tourism, Byron Chan at the farewell dinner to conclude the three-day consultation summit in Kavieng last week.

Mr. Chan said this reflects a disservice in the administration of the foreign aid program.

"When you see the amount of external aid flowing in, large amounts of money and manpower go to HIV/AIDS with very little success rate while malaria campaign hardly receives donor funding that it kills more people than HIV/AIDS," Chan said.

The summit also gave the opportunity to Governor Sir Julius and his government to present copies of their vision and mission document called the "Malagan declaration." Chan said the government needs the donor's support to achieve their vision.

Meanwhile, the summit ended successfully with the signing of the Kavieng declaration, a guiding framework, under which all foreign development partners would work together with the PNG Government to target projects interventions and funding.

That was a deviation from the past where development partners had the flexibility to decide their own development agendas and targets.

## Solomons government questions Sogavare gifts

**HONIARA, Solomon Islands** (Solomon Star/PIR)—Ousted Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare gave out two government vehicles and a house for free when he was in office.

One double-cabin hilux was given to the family of the late East Malaita Member of Parliament Joses Sanga, another to former attorney general Nuatali Tongarutu.

The family of late Aoke/Langalanga Member of Parliament Bartholomew Ulufa'alu was given a government house.

Sogavare yesterday said he did that in recognition of the services these men and woman gave to the country.

But the Government said the action was illegal.

A spokesman from the Prime Minister's Office said they are investigating the legality of the gifts.

"There's no provision in the Parliamentary Entitlement Regulations that provides for such gifts," the spokesman said. "This is illegal. You cannot do that with government assets. Sogavare is setting a dangerous precedent here."

Both men were ministers in the Sogavare regime.

Sogavare also defended the vehicle given to Tongarutu.

He said the vehicle was given to compensate the loss of income to Tongarutu's business when she was acting attorney general.

Tongarutu, who operates a law firm in Honiara, was acting attorney general for about six months.

Sogavare said he was yet to formalise the decision to give those cars and house away.

"We were just about to do it when the change in government came. I hope the Sikua government will see the merit in my thinking and formalise the decision."

But the government spokesman said Sogavare's decision to give out government assets has no legal basis.

## New Caledonia mine offered tax breaks

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand** (RNZI/PIR)—The French government says it will grant a key nickel project in New Caledonia's north tax exemptions worth US$230 million.

The concession has been made to Xstrata of Switzerland which is to build the Koniambo nickel plant at an estimated cost of US$3.8 billion.

The project is expected to create 2,000 jobs during its construction phase and is to be completed by 2011.

The mine and plant have as main stakeholder the SMSP company owned by the northern province.

France has backed the Koniambo project as a way of developing the economy of the mainly Kanak north of the territory.

**SHOOTING DOWN A SATELLITE** AP

In this Dec. 11, 2003 picture provided by the U.S. Navy, a Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) is launched from the Aegis cruiser USS *Lake Erie* in Kauai, Hawaii as part of the Missile Defense Agency's Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) test against medium range ballistic missiles. The government issued notices to aviators and mariners to remain clear of a section of the Pacific beginning at 10:30pm EST Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2008 indicating the first window of opportunity to launch an SM-3 missile from the USS *Lake Erie*, in an effort to hit a crippled U.S. spy satellite.

# Business

# Oil pushes past $101 on Fed view

**NEW YORK** (AP) -- Oil futures rallied again Wednesday, pushing briefly past $101 a barrel after the Federal Reserve lowered its forecast for economic growth this year, convincing energy investors that the central bank will slash interest rates further. At the pump, meanwhile, gas prices rose another 2 cents overnight.

The Fed said damage from the housing slump and problems in the credit markets will slow economic growth to between 1.3 percent and 2 percent this year, down from a previous forecast for GDP growth of between 1.8 percent and 2.5 percent.

Oil investors can interpret such news in one of two ways: Selling on concerns that the economy, and thus demand for oil, is cooling; or buying on the prospect that interest rates will fall, weakening the dollar and feeding new buying of oil futures. On Wednesday, they definitively chose the latter view.

"The Fed was ... the catalyst to get us going here," said Phil Flynn, an analyst at Alaron Trading Corp. in Chicago.

The contract for March delivery of light sweet crude, which was expiring later Wednesday, rose 73 cents to settle at a record $100.74 on the New York Mercantile Exchange after earlier rising as high as $101.32, a new trading record. On Tuesday, the contract jumped $4.51 a barrel.

Falling rates tend to weaken the dollar, and crude futures offer a hedge against a falling dollar. Also, oil futures bought and sold in dollars are more attractive to foreign investors when the greenback is falling. In the moments after the Fed released its forecast, oil prices spiked sharply higher.

"This is unbelievable," Flynn said.

Earlier, crude prices fluctuated in part due to low trading volumes. Trading in the expiring March contract was about 10 percent of the level of trading in April crude oil, which will become the front-month contract on Thursday. When volumes are low, price moves can be exaggerated. April crude settled unchanged at $99.70 a barrel after rising as high as $100.86 earlier.

Oil prices are still within the range of inflation-adjusted highs set in early 1980. Depending on how the adjustment is calculated, $38 a barrel then would be worth $96 to $103 or more today.

Two new economic reports Wednesday suggested the economy is cooling. The Labor Department said its Consumer Price Index, a measure of inflation, rose by 0.4 percent last month, more than economists expected. The Commerce Department, meanwhile, said construction of new homes and apartments rose by 0.8 percent in January, but that applications for building permits, an indicator of future activity, fell by 3 percent.

The reports come a week after the Energy Department, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the International Energy Agency all lowered their oil demand growth forecasts for this year.

AP

Debbie Stunkard gets ready to pump gas into her car at a BP station in Mount Lebanon, Pa., Feb. 19, 2008.

# Fed lowers economic forecast

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—The Federal Reserve on Wednesday lowered its projection for economic growth this year, citing damage from the double blows of a housing slump and credit crunch. It said it also expects higher unemployment and inflation.

The updated forecasts come at a time Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues are concerned the economy could continue to weaken, even after their aggressive interest rate cuts in January, according to minutes of those private deliberations released Wednesday.

"With no signs of stabilization in the housing sector and with financial conditions not yet stabilized, the committee agreed that downside risks to growth would remain even after this action," according to minutes of the Fed's Jan. 29-30 closed door meeting.

The Fed at that session voted to cut a key interest rate by one-half percentage point to 3 percent. Just eight days earlier, the Fed, in an emergency session, slashed its rate by a rare three-quarters percentage point. The two rate cuts together marked the most dramatic rate reductions in a single month by the Fed in a quarter century.

Under its new economic forecast, the Fed said that it now believes the gross domestic product will grow between 1.3 percent and 2 percent this year. That's lower than a previous Fed forecast for growth, which at that time was estimated to be between 1.8 percent and 2.5 percent.

# Consumer prices post another big gain

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Consumers paid more to fill up their gas tanks, buy groceries and go to the hospital in January as prices on a range of items climbed.

Inflation was increasing even as the economy was slowing dramatically, a development certain to raise concerns at the Federal Reserve. The Fed has cut interest rates aggressively in the belief that fighting off a threatened recession was more important than worrying about inflationary pressures.

The Labor Department reported its closely watched Consumer Price Index posted a gain of 0.4 percent last month. That matched the December increase and was higher than the 0.3 percent rise analysts had expected. Food costs jumped by the largest amount in 11 months.

Core inflation, which excludes food and energy, rose by 0.3 percent, the biggest jump in seven months. That increase reflected higher prices for medical care, education, clothing, tobacco and airline fares.

"The economy may be faltering, but that has not stopped firms from raising prices," said Joel Naroff, chief economist at Naroff Economic Advisers. "It didn't matter whether you went to the supermarket or ate out, costs were up."

# Probe: Soc Gen trader had no accomplice

**PARIS** (AP)—Investigators of a $7 billion fraud at French bank Societe Generale say that the only trader implicated in the scandal acted alone.

Investigators also said Wednesday they found no evidence that there were any personal monetary gains made through the allegedly unauthorized positions taken by futures trader Jerome Kerviel.

In an interim report, internal investigators at France's second-largest bank said procedures were followed correctly but they failed to stop Kerviel, 31, who is accused of carrying out trades that forced the bank to mop up almost 5 billion euros ($7.33 billion) in losses.

"At this stage of the investigations, there is no evidence of embezzlement or internal or external complicity," according to a report by a committee charged with investigating the losses. "The investigations are continuing ... to cover a wider area than the activities of the author of the fraud."

Societe Generale has said Kerviel began trading illicitly in 2005 for small amounts, building up to bets totaling 50 billion euros ($73.28 billion) discovered on Jan. 18, which the bank then liquidated.

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### GMAC to cut about 930 auto finance jobs

**DETROIT** (AP)—GMAC LLC plans to combine 20 U.S. and Canadian offices into five regional centers and cut about 930 jobs in its auto finance business to cut expenses in the wake of tightening credit markets and heavy losses last year. The job cuts will occur by the end of the year and represent about 15 percent of the work force in the auto loan business unit. The company, which was once the finance arm of General Motors Corp., said the five regional business centers will be in the Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Pittsburgh and Toronto areas. GMAC expects to save about $175 million per year, but will have to spend $65 million to $85 million this year for employee severance and office-closing expenses.

### Sears settles lawsuit over stoves

**ST. LOUIS** (AP)—Sears Holdings Corp. will install safety brackets on its stoves in millions of households or offer gift cards in settling an Illinois class-action lawsuit over the appliances' supposed propensity to topple. Under an agreement signed off on last month by a Madison County judge, Hoffman Estates, Ill.-based Sears will offer to fix all brands of its freestanding or slide-in kitchen ranges in as many as 3.9 million homes by bolting them to a wall or floor. The deal covers Sears ranges sold from mid-2000 through last Sept. 18, when a judge granted the settlement temporary approval. The deal resolving the lawsuit dating to July 2004 also requires Sears to install safety brackets in newly purchased ranges for the next three years. Attorneys for the plaintiffs estimate the settlement could cost Sears more than $500 million.

### Two gift retailers file for bankruptcy

**NEW YORK** (AP)—A weak holiday season and a struggling economy led retailers Sharper Image Corp. and Lillian Vernon Corp. to file for bankruptcy this week, and analysts predict others could soon follow them as consumer spending worsens. "You'll see a record number of bankruptcies over the next 50, 100, and 1,000 days," said Burt P. Flickinger III, managing director of the New York-based retail consulting firm Strategic Resource Group. "Consumers are cash and credit constrained. They're out of purchasing power." Both Sharper Image, known for its high-tech novelty gadgets, and Lillian Vernon, which sells low-cost gifts and gadgets through its catalog and Web site, have long been plagued with falling sales. But retailers across the sector have been laying off staff and closing stores as consumers cut back on discretionary spending. The International Council of Shopping Centers projects 2008 store closings could reach 5,770 stores in 2008, the largest number of closings since 2004.

## STOCK Portfolio

### ASIAN MARKETS

| | |
|---|---|
| AUSTRALIA | 5,624.300 Up 47.000 (+0.84%) |
| HONG KONG | 23,931.13 Up 340.55 (+1.44%) |
| JAKARTA | 2,715.3931 Up 26.137 (+0.97%) |
| TOKYO | 13,699.43 Up 389.06 (+2.92%) |
| K. LUMPUR | 1,414.32 Down 11.17 (-0.78%) |
| MANILA | 3,176.06 Down 4.99 (-0.16%) |
| SINGAPORE | 3,068.40 Up 41.57 (+1.37%) |
| SEOUL | 1,705.85 Up 17.94 (+1.06%) |
| BANGKOK | 827.13 Down 8.49 (-1.02%) |

### LEADING INDICATORS

| | |
|---|---|
| DOW | 12,427.26 +90.04 |
| NASDAQ | 2,327.10 +20.90 |
| S&P | 1,360.03 +11.25 |

### MONEY MARKET

| | |
|---|---|
| Australian Dollar | 1.0876 |
| British Pound | 0.5147 |
| Canadian Dollar | 1.0123 |
| Chinese Renmbi | 7.1492 |
| Euro | 0.6792 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 7.8009 |
| Indian Rupee | 39.667 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 9174 |
| Japanese Yen | 108.115 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 3.221 |
| New Zealand Dollar | 1.25 |
| Philippine Peso | 40.745 |
| Singapore Dollar | 1.4111 |
| South Korean Won | 947 |
| Swiss Franc | 1.0993 |
| Taiwan Dollar | 31.507 |
| Thailand Baht | 31.375 |

*In U.S. dollar terms*

*Source: Associated Press*

# For the interview, your motto is 'Be prepared'

By MARY ELLEN SLAYTER
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Interviews are perhaps the most stressful part of any job search, but a few hours of preparation can go a long way toward quelling some of your anxiety. That time can also make it more likely that you will get the job.

Good preparation starts with your attitude. "Number one: Relax," said Brad Karsh, author of "Confessions of a Recruiting Director: The Insider's Guide to Landing Your First Job."

"So many people think everything (in a job interview) is a trick question," he said. But these are just "honest conversations between two people."

But relaxing doesn't mean slacking off. Nor does it mean slipping into overconfidence. "Interviewing is the step that most people think they're good at, but they're not," said Susan Strayer, author of The Right Job, Right Now: The Complete Tool-Kit for Finding Your Perfect Career.

Before you walk into a job interview, there are some basic steps you should take to prepare. Some questions are almost universal, and you should know how to answer them in a polished way. These include standards such as discussing your strengths and weaknesses. Other questions will be specific to the job for which you are applying, and will require some research to answer thoughtfully. The most common questions will relate to your work history and education, and how they relate to the job at hand. In short, what makes you qualified?

Start with the job description, if there is one. This is practically a cheat sheet for the interview, Karsh said. "If it says they want someone with managerial experience, be prepared to be asked about your managerial experience."

Also, be prepared to expound on everything on your resume. "Have reasons for everything that you've done," Karsh said. "The resume is what I call the 'whats.' In an interview, I want to know the 'whys' and the 'hows.' A single bullet point on your resume might inspire an interviewer to talk for 10 minutes."

You should also expect to answer some questions about the company—and to ask a few intelligent ones of your own.

"You should absolutely know what an employer does, how it was founded and what its goals are before you walk in the door," said Strayer, who is director of talent management for the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co. "Know how a company makes money," she said. "Even if it's a nonprofit, you still need to know what their funding model is."

With well-known employers, it's easier to tell how they butter their bread, she acknowledged. It's when the company is new or works primarily business-to-business that deeper knowledge about its operations will really help you stand out.

Think broadly about where you can gather information, Strayer said. "People rely on Web resources and company reports, but their best bet is to find contacts in the company. Ask what they are working on, what their struggles are." You can even ask about the interview style of the people with whom you will be meeting.

Be prepared to ask your own questions. "One of the worst things you can say at the end of the interview is that you don't have any (questions)," Karsh said. These queries can be business-related, about the employer's long-term goals, or they can be personal, about workplace culture or how the interviewer came to work there.

Strayer said you should always practice your responses. She encourages people to tape themselves to see whether they are engaging in any unconscious behaviors that could hurt them, such as excessively using filler words like, well, "like." You know?

However, please don't try to memorize specific answers to any of the likely questions. At best you'll sound wooden; at worst you will forget all your best lines just when you need them most.

Instead, bring along a notebook, with a few key points you want to remember jotted down.

You can even create a list with brief descriptions of your accomplishments, said Katy Piotrowski, author of "The Career Coward's Guide to Interviewing" and a career counselor in Fort Collins, Colo. "Write it down. Take it to the interview. It's like a security blanket."

Strayer said the secret to interviewing is to create a library of stories that indicate the point that you want to get across. "That way when you're in the interview, you're just recalling a story," she said. "When you give examples, then you bring life to it."

All this preparation may sound like a lot of work, but it can pay off when hiring managers are trying to decide between two otherwise equally qualified candidates, Strayer said. "When decision makers sit around a table ... they recall stories. They don't just recall words."

# A doer shouldn't take blame for a do-nothing

By MARY ELLEN SLAYTER
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

**Q. There are three people in my department: my boss, a co-worker and me. Many of the tasks that are assigned to me are dependent on my co-worker's ability to do his job. However, he has proven to be unreliable and sloppy in his work. My boss is aware of this but has said she doesn't care about the who did/didn't do what and when. It's my responsibility to do whatever I need to do to see that the tasks are completed in a timely and complete manner. I understand this. However, I have no consequences to enforce when he fails to complete his work. My reminders fall on deaf ears while my boss wants me to figure it out on my own. I've never supervised anyone in any official capacity. I don't understand how I'm supposed to get someone to do his job when I have no authority over him. So either I do his work for him or I take the blame.**

**A.** Friedman: Your co-worker is taking advantage of you and your hard work. What a frustrating and terrible situation to be in. We would recommend a few things. Start keeping track of your accomplishments and contributions as separate from your co-worker's. Start selling your success to your boss in a way that is comfortable for you. Kim's style is to set up a meeting with our clients to walk them through her accomplishments live and in person. My style is to send weekly e-mails, full of bullet points listing what I've done. It is important in this situation to start separating yourself from your co-worker and his bad work.

■ ■ ■

**Q. How can I go from a person with seven years of experience to a manager of others in the same field. Other than telling prospective employers that I think I could do it and here's why, what's the real link between becoming a manager?**

**A.** Yorio: It's a two part process. One, you have to ask ... maybe they don't know you want more responsibilities and to manage. Two, you have to make the case for why you are ready for management responsibilities and how you have demonstrated leadership skills (and be specific when listing them). Then make an appointment with your manager to discuss your career development program. If you are a good employee, and it sounds like you are, then your organization will want to chart a path for long-term growth. Unfortunately, organizations aren't always paying attention to their employees, so you need to advocate for yourself.

*Questions are from Career Tracks, an online discussion about workplace issues. Guests were Caitlin Friedman and Kim Yorio, authors of* The Girl's Guide to Kicking Your Career Into Gear (Broadway Books). *Learn more about Friedman and Yorio on their Web site www.girlsguidetobusiness.com.*

## $ DOLLARS AND SENSE

# Scrimp and save

By DAVID UFFINGTON
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If you made New Year's resolutions to save money wherever you could, how are you doing? Are you meeting your goals? For many of us, the initial rush of determination has worn off, and we're back to our normal spending patterns—which means we're not saving much at all.

It's never too late to try again. It's said that if you can do something for 21 days, it will be come a habit. Here are some relatively painless ways you can save a few dollars.

Food: Are you still eating out twice a week, or back to grabbing an expensive cup of coffee on the way to work? When you cook at home, fix double the amount and freeze half. Take lunch to work a few days a week.

Money: Empty your pockets and purse of all coins every night and put them in a jar. Don't carry your credit cards. Don't pay full price for anything. Look for bargains. (This keeps you from making fast purchases, as well as saving money.)

Maintenance: Is the bathroom faucet still dripping? Spend a few minutes and a few cents, and the savings will add up. Get in the habit of tending to money-draining repairs immediately.

Insurance: Can you logically raise your deductible and reduce the monthly insurance payment?

Telephone: Many people have realized that they're paying for two phones—a landline at home and a portable cell phone—and have dropped the home phone altogether. This could be a savings of hundred of dollars per year. If you absolutely need the landline, consider dropping options such as call waiting or call forwarding.

Coupons: Are you clipping grocery coupons and actually using them? Coupons aren't just for food and entertainment. Check your local phone book. Quite often there's a whole section of coupons from local merchants for oil changes, carpet cleaning, video rentals and more.

Cable TV: Compare the cost of the premium movie channels and one of the by-mail video rentals. Some of the rental plans will let you have up to four movies at a time for less than $20 per month.

Try to develop frugal attitudes about your money. Remember: It takes 21 days for a good habit to be formed, but you have to do it every day.

# Nation

## ‘Hero’ girl recovering after shooting

**DETROIT** (AP)—Alexis Goggins climbed aboard a special tricycle and maneuvered through hospital hallways, beginning the months of physical therapy she needs to recover from six gunshot wounds. To many people, the soft-spoken 7-year-old is a hero after she threw herself across her mother just as a gunman was about to shoot the woman in an SUV.

“An angel is what I call her,” Seliethia Parker said of her daughter.

After more than two months in the hospital and six surgeries, Alexis was recently released. She returns twice a week for physical therapy.

The young girl bears several scars from the Dec. 2 shooting, including a long, thin surgical line stretching from one side of her hairline to the other. Her right eye, which was blinded in the attack, has also been removed.

During rehabilitation, she rides a tricycle designed to be pedaled with a person’s hands and plays hand-eye coordination games.

“I’ll be good for therapy,” Alexis promised her mother before bounding back to the games.

Alexis speaks little about the shooting.

“She remembers bits and pieces, but she’s not really talking about it much. It’s like she’s blocking it out or something,” said Parker, 30.

The mother and daughter were getting a ride from a friend when Parker’s former boyfriend emerged from the shadows outside Parker’s house and jumped into the vehicle. He then forced the friend to drive at gunpoint for several minutes.

Under the pretense of needing fuel, Parker’s friend stopped at a Detroit gas station to call 911.

Inside the SUV, Parker pleaded with the gunman not to shoot. As he was about to open fire, Alexis cried, “Don’t hurt my mother!” and jumped into her mother’s arms from the back seat.

Despite her daughter’s efforts, Parker was shot twice.

Alexis is learning-disabled and lags behind other youngsters her age. As a result, police say, it may never be known whether Alexis meant to shield her mother from the bullets. But Parker has said that if her daughter had not put herself in between she might have been killed.

Calvin Tillie, a 29-year-old former convict on parole, is charged with two counts of assault with intent to commit murder, along with other offenses. Parker said she met Tillie last year but called off the relationship after three months.

The Associated Press left messages with his court-appointed attorney, Kim Basen Michon.

Alexis Goggins and her mother, Seliethia Parker, sit together at Children’s Hospital in Detroit, Feb. 14, 2008. AP

## Navy missile hits spy satellite

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—A missile launched from a Navy ship successfully struck a dying U.S. spy satellite passing 130 miles over the Pacific on Wednesday, a defense official said. Full details were not immediately available.

It happened just after 10:30 p.m. EST.

Two officials said the missile was launched successfully. One official, who is close to the process, said it hit the target. He said details on the results were not immediately known.

The goal in this first-of-its-kind mission for the Navy was not just to hit the satellite but to obliterate a tank aboard the spacecraft carrying 1,000 pounds of a toxic fuel called hydrazine.

U.S. officials have said the fuel would pose a potential health hazard to humans if it landed in a populated area. Although the odds of that were small even if the Pentagon had chosen not to try to shoot down the satellite, it was determined that it was worth trying to eliminate even that small chance.

Officials said it might take a day or longer to know for sure if the toxic fuel was blown up.

## Clinton faces daunting deficit in delegate race

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Democratic Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton must win 57 percent of the remaining primary and caucus delegates to erase Barack Obama’s lead, a daunting task requiring landslide-sized victories by a struggling presidential candidate.

Obama’s victories in Wisconsin and Hawaii on Tuesday—his ninth and 10th in a row—left him with 1,178 pledged delegates won in primaries and caucuses in The Associated Press’ count. Clinton has 1,024.

Another 1,025 remain to be awarded, most of them in contests in 14 states, Guam and Puerto Rico. It takes 2,025 to win the nomination.

AP

Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., speaks during a roundtable discussion at Grace’s Grill, Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2008, in Parma, Ohio.

Further complicating Clinton’s challenge, Obama appears particularly well-positioned to win at least one of the remaining states with ease. Mississippi, with a primary on March 11, fits a pattern of Southern states with large black populations that he has won handily, including South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana.

The rival campaigns maintain their own delegate counts. And while both agree Obama is the leader, they differ on the significance.

“The only way in this system to amass delegates is to win by big margins. Close races result in close delegate distribution,” David Plouffe, Obama’s campaign manager, told reporters in a conference call.

“The only way she can do it is winning states like Ohio 65-35, Texas 65-35, Pennsylvania, you know, 70-30. and you go on and on and on. She’d have to win pretty much all the states, even states where we’re considered to have some strength,” he added.

Clinton’s top aides said Plouffe was deliberately trying to set unrealistically high expectations for the former first lady.

“We expect to do well in both those states,” said Harold Ickes, speaking of Texas and Ohio, which hold primaries on March 4. “But 65 percent is a far reach and there is no expectation here that we’re going to hit that number.”

## ACROSS THE NATION

### Feds to probe police brutality charge

**SHREVEPORT, La.** (AP)—Police chief Henry Whitehorn said Wednesday the district attorney and the Justice Department will investigate the case of a woman who is seen in a police department video lying in a pool of blood in an interrogation room. Angela Garbarino, 42, said she was beaten after her Nov. 17 arrest on a drunk driving charge. Wiley Willis, the police officer who was fired Feb. 5 in connection with the case, said through his attorney that Garbarino fell. Excerpts from a police video tape show Garbarino struggling with an officer in the interrogation room. But the camera was turned off for a time. When it was turned back on, Garbarino is seen on the floor in a pool of blood. Garbarino said Willis, 30, tried to force her to take a breath test against her will and that he beat her after turning off the camera.

### Airman dies in collision during training

**EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.** (AP)—An Air Force fighter pilot died Wednesday after his jet and another likely collided during a training exercise and crashed into the Gulf of Mexico. The other pilot was rescued and is expected to survive. The single-seat F-15C Eagles crashed Wednesday off the Florida Panhandle, said Col. Todd Harmer, commander of the 33rd Fighter Wing, 58th Fighter Squadron. The pilots had ejected and were later rescued. The cause of the collision about 35 miles south of Tyndall Air Force Base was not immediately known, but the Air Force will investigate, Harmer said. A Coast Guard rescue jet located one pilot and radioed the location to a fishing vessel, which picked him up, said Coast Guard Petty Officer James Harless. A Coast Guard helicopter then hoisted the pilot off the vessel.

### Soldier guilty of assault in Iraqi death

**WHEELER ARMY AIRFIELD, Hawaii** (AP)—A soldier who had been charged with murder in the shooting death of an unarmed Iraqi was convicted by a military jury Wednesday of aggravated assault. Spc. Christopher Shore, based in Hawaii, had insisted that his platoon leader ordered him to kill the Iraqi man on June 23 near Kirkuk and that he intentionally fired to miss. Aggravated assault carries a maximum of eight years in prison, a dishonorable discharge and a drop to the Army’s lowest pay grade, but Shore could receive a lighter sentence. Shore had no visible reaction when the verdict was read, and declined to comment afterward as he hugged friends and relatives outside the hearing room.

### NJ college reopened after lockdown

**JERSEY CITY, N.J.** (AP)—St. Peter’s College locked down its campus for several hours Wednesday after the discovery of a note that referred to killing students and the shootings at Virginia Tech. The lockdown ended shortly before 3 p.m., after a room-by-room police search of the roughly 3,000-student campus in northern New Jersey turned up nothing dangerous, school spokeswoman Lorraine McConnell said. At 10:40 a.m., campus security became aware of the handwritten note, taped in the stairwell of an administration and classroom building, McConnell said. Within two minutes, the college sent students e-mail and cell phone text message alerts, using a system set up after April’s massacre at Virginia Tech, where a gunman murdered 32 people before killing himself.

### Court: Immigrants suffer bad lawyers

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Immigrants seeking legal status in the United States are being victimized with disturbing frequency by lousy lawyers, a federal appeals panel said Wednesday. After criticizing the work done and not done by defense lawyers, the three-judge panel of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan took aim at the government, scolding its lawyers for quibbling over irrelevant language in one case in a quest to win. Victimized by the failures of lawyers on both sides are the immigrants, “a vulnerable population who come to this country searching for a better life and often arrive unfamiliar with our language and culture, in economic deprivation and in fear,” the court wrote. “In immigration matters, so much is at stake - the right to remain in this country, to reunite a family or to work,” the court said.

# Asia

## Death toll in RP floods, landslides at 13

### 3 others missing, 148,000 displaced

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—Weeklong rains have triggered landslides and floods across the eastern Philippines, leaving at least 13 people dead, three missing and tens of thousands displaced, officials said Wednesday.

Most of the deaths occurred from drowning in Eastern Samar province since Feb. 15, when a low pressure area dumped heavy rains that caused flash floods and cut off major roads and damaged bridges, officials said.

The Office of Civil Defense in Manila said the entire province was under a state of emergency to enable officials to draw emergency funds for relief operations.

Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone said 10 people drowned and one was accidentally electrocuted. Three others were missing, he added. The civil defense office said two people died in nearby Leyte province.

Evardone said about 148,000 people have been displaced and two towns—Jitapad and Maslog—remained submerged, although flood waters were subsiding in some areas.

"We could not deliver relief goods to far-flung villages because of the strong flood currents, and the bad weather was preventing helicopters from flying," he said.

He said the rains, normal at this time of the year, were "extraordinarily super strong."

The civil defense office said the floods destroyed crops and infrastructure worth 305 million pesos (US$7.4 million, €5 million), mostly in Eastern Samar. The Red Cross said at least 23 people were injured when four rivers burst their banks.

The island of Samar, which is prone to flooding and natural disasters, is about 570 kilometers (350 miles) southeast of Manila.

## Philippine police warn officers who join protests will be fired

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—The Philippine police force threatened Thursdsay to fire members who join mounting opposition and church-led protests calling for President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's resignation amid worsening corruption scandals.

The warning came as Arroyo's top allies sought to play down fresh threats to her administration while opposition groups and the influential Roman Catholic church continued a series of demonstrations in support of a star witness who exposed alleged large-scale bribery.

Ahead of Monday's rallies marking the anniversary of the 1986 "people power" revolt that ousted late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, national police spokesman Senior Superintendent Nicanor Bartolome said officers caught attending the protests will face administrative charges that may lead to dismissal.

"They are supposed to be government employees," he said.

About 10,000 people called for Arroyo's ouster at a rally in Manila's financial district last Friday. They were backed by close to 100 former government officials who signed a manifesto condemning Arroyo's "wrongful governance" and calling on her entire Cabinet to resign.

AP

Protesters light candles during a rally calling for the ouster of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in suburban Pasig, east of Manila, on Wednesday Feb. 20, 2008.

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, called for a different kind of "people power" revolt to fight endemic corruption.

He said after meeting with about 50 civic, student and business groups Tuesday that the massive anti-corruption movement that ousted Arroyo's predecessor, Joseph Estrada, in 2001, was a disappointment because it "installed a president who later on was judged by surveys as the most corrupt president."

Many Catholic churches and key universities have set up "truth centers" to collect signatures and cash donations from the public to back a key corruption witness, Rodolfo Lozada Jr., and other officials exposing government corruption.

The latest scandal battering Arroyo, who has survived four power grabs and three impeachment attempts since 2001, erupted after Lozada, a former government consultant, accused a former elections chief of demanding a huge kickback from brokering a government contract with Chinese telecommunications giant ZTE Corp.

## South Korea's next president is cleared of fraud

**SEOUL, South Korea** (AP)—A special prosecutor cleared South Korean President-elect Lee Myung-bak of financial fraud allegations Thursday, allowing him to take office next week with his mandate untarnished.

The announcement ended a probe over suspicions that Lee colluded in a 2001 stock case, a controversy that plagued Lee throughout last year's campaign.

"It is fortunate that all suspicions were cleared once again," Lee said in comments released by his office. "I thank the people who have given me trust and support so far. I think the way to repay this is to work harder and devote myself to serving the people and saving the nation's economy."

Government prosecutors had already cleared Lee of the allegations, which he also strongly denied, weeks before the election. But rival lawmakers pushed for the special probe in an apparent attempt to keep the scandal alive through the vote.

South Korean voters, however, overlooked the alleged wrongdoing to give Lee a landslide victory in the Dec. 19 vote.

Lee

"The president-elect was not involved in the stock price manipulation," special prosecutor Chung Ho-young said in a televised announcement of the outcome of a 38-day investigation.

Lee's relatives and former business partners had attempted to stop the probe by filing a petition with the Constitutional Court, but the court ruled last month that the investigation could go on, making Lee the first South Korean president-elect to undergo a criminal inquiry. Special prosecutors questioned Lee on Sunday.

Even if Lee had been found at fault, he would have still been able to assume office Monday as scheduled because the constitution grants sitting presidents immunity from criminal prosecution except with especially serious charges such as treason.

However, such a case would have significantly undermined his mandate to assume the highest office in South Korea.

He also cleared Lee of allegations that he had owned a tract of land in Seoul under another person's name and lied about it, and that he gave illicit business favors to a company while serving as Seoul's mayor from 2002-2006.

The scandal came to a head in November with the extradition from the United States of fugitive Korean-American fund manager Kim Kyung-jun, who once had joined Lee in setting up an Internet financial firm.

Kim was accused of making millions of dollars by rigging stock prices from a separate investment company and fleeing to the United States with the ill-gotten gains.

At issue has been allegations by Lee's liberal rivals that the money used for the stock manipulation came from a third investment firm, known as BBK, and that Lee was its real owner - meaning he was involved in the crime.

## ASIAN BRIEFS

### British soldiers killed in Afghanistan

**KABUL, Afghanistan** (AP) -- An explosion killed one British soldier and wounded another in southern Afghanistan Wednesday, and U.S.-led coalition and Afghan troops detained 22 suspected insurgents in two separate operations, officials said. Britain's Ministry of Defense in London said the blast hit as a British patrol was trying to disrupt Taliban activity in Helmand province. The cause of the explosion was not immediately known. The wounded soldier was treated for minor injuries. The ministry said the death brought to 89 the number of British service members killed in Afghanistan. The coalition said in a statement that the joint forces detained 11 suspected insurgents and discovered 1,000 pounds of heroin north of the town of Musa Qala, also in Helmand province.

### Ramos Horta coming round after surgery

**DARWIN, Australia** (AP) -- East Timor President Jose Ramos-Horta was slowly being returned to consciousness by doctors who have kept him sedated since he was shot in an assassination attempt last week, his spokesman said Thursday. Ramos-Horta has undergone surgery five times since the Feb. 11 shooting in Dili, the East Timorese capital, and has been heavily sedated at a hospital in northern Australia to help him stay still and avoid pain. Suspected rebels shot Ramos-Horta, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, near his home on Feb. 11. An hour later, gunmen attacked Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, who escaped unhurt. Three U.S. FBI agents arrived in East Timor on Wednesday to join the probe into the attacks.

### Earthquake kills 3 in Indonesia

**JAKARTA, Indonesia** (AP) -- A powerful earthquake struck western Indonesia on Wednesday, killing three people and injuring 25 others, officials said. A tsunami warning was briefly triggered, but no waves were detected. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake had a preliminary magnitude of 7.6 and struck under the island of Simeulue off the western coast of Sumatra - the region worst hit in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Rustam Pakaya, the head of the Indonesian Health Ministry's disaster center, said "many" buildings on Simeulue were damaged and three people were killed. He said at least 25 others were seriously injured. The quake was felt across much of western and northern Sumatra, where many people fled swaying homes and buildings.

### Japan wants more US steps to halt crime

**TOKYO** (AP) -- Japanese officials said tight restrictions imposed Wednesday on U.S. troops in Japan are a good first step toward stopping military-related crimes amid accusations of rape against a Marine, but said more needs to be done. U.S. forces limited some 45,000 troops, civilian employees and their families to bases, workplaces or off-base homes indefinitely to quell the furor over the rape allegations and other military-linked crimes. The restrictions went beyond a midnight curfew already in place for enlisted Marines on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa, where the rape allegedly occurred and where most of the 50,000 U.S. troops in the country are based. Top Japanese officials welcomed the move, but said it was not sufficient.

## Religious hard-liners out in Pakistan

**PESHAWAR, Pakistan** (AP)—Fed up with violence and economic hardship, voters in the deeply conservative northwest have thrown out the Islamist parties that ruled this province for five years - a clear sign that Pakistanis are rejecting religious extremism in a region where al-Qaida and the Taliban have sought refuge.

Instead, voters in turbulent North West Frontier Province, which borders Afghanistan, gave their support to secular parties that promised to pave the streets, create jobs and bring peace through dialogue and economic incentives to the extremists.

That may conflict with U.S. pressure to step up the fight against armed militants linked to al-Qaida and the Taliban.

"They didn't do anything for the people," Bokhari Shah, 65, said of the religious parties. "They have done nothing to help the people, and we are afraid to even come out from our homes because of all these bomb blasts."

Five years ago, voters in this mostly Pashtun province - many of them from the same ethnic group as the Afghan Taliban - set off alarm bells in the U.S. when they elected a provincial government dominated by a coalition of pro-Taliban clerics - the United Action Alliance.

The alliance rode to victory on the crest of public outrage over the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, not only winning control of the North West Frontier but taking 12 percent of the vote in national parliament balloting as well.

The religious parties also profited at the time from a move by President Pervez Musharraf to sideline the two mainstream political parties by laying down educational standards for candidates that allowed graduates of Quranic schools - long a breeding ground for extremism - to run for office, but banned veteran politicians who lacked university degrees.

# World

## Group claims Iran speeding up nuke plans

**BRUSSELS, Belgium** (AP)—An exiled Iranian opposition group claimed Wednesday that Tehran was speeding up a program to develop nuclear weapons. "The Iran regime entered a new phase in its nuclear project," said Mohammad Mohaddessin of the Paris-based National Council of Resistance of Iran.

The NCRI is the political wing of the People's Mujahedeen of Iran, which advocates the overthrow of government in Tehran. The Mujahedeen has been designated a terrorist group by the United States and the European Union as well as Iran.

Mohaddessin claimed that Tehran has established a command and research center near a Tehran university. And, he said, Iran is developing a nuclear warhead for use on medium-range missiles at a site on the southeast edge of Tehran. Mohaddessin also claimed that the regime obtained aid from North Korea.

It was not possible to independently verify the NCRI claims. Mohaddessin said his group got the information from "hundreds" of reports and sources from within the Iranian regime, whom he did not name. He said some of the sources are within the nuclear project itself.

An official of the International Atomic Energy Agency, who spoke anonymously because he was not authorized to talk to the media, said the agency was aware of the allegations. Mohaddessin said he had provided information to the IAEA on Tuesday.

Iran has steadfastly denied it is working to obtain a nuclear bomb, arguing that its nuclear program is civilian.

A recent U.S. National Intelligence Estimate said Iran halted a nuclear weapons development program in 2003 because of international pressure. But the White House said Iran continues to hide information, remains in violation of two U.N. Security Council resolutions, tests ballistic missiles and is enriching uranium, which can be used to build an atomic bomb.

**TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE**
An airplane passes in front of the moon as a total lunar eclipse begins Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2008 over Buenos Aires. The last total lunar eclipse until 2010 occurred Wednesday night, with cameo appearances by Saturn and the bright star Regulus on either side of the veiled full moon.
AP

## Islamic leader appeals against his extradition

**LONDON** (AP)—An Islamic preacher accused of trying to establish a terrorist training camp in Oregon asked a British court on Wednesday to block his extradition to the United States.

Earlier this month, Britain's Home Office approved the extradition of Abu Hamza al-Masri, who once led London's Finsbury Park Mosque.

British counterterrorism officials say the mosque has attracted extremists. Its worshippers have included Sept. 11 conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui and "shoe bomber" Richard Reid.

On Wednesday, al-Masri's lawyer, Muddassar Arani, filed an appeal in Britain's High Court. British courts should be allowed to examine the evidence in the U.S. case against her client before an extradition, she said.

The Egyptian-born al-Masri was arrested in Britain on an extradition warrant in 2004, but the process was put on hold while he stood trial here and appealed his convictions.

He was sentenced to seven years in prison for fomenting racial hatred and urging his followers to kill non-Muslims. If convicted in the U.S., Al-Masri would carry out his sentence in Britain first.

## UN Council extends Somalia peace mission…

**UNITED NATIONS** (AP)—The U.N. Security Council authorized African peacekeepers Wednesday to continue operating in Somalia for six months while the United Nations mulls taking over those duties.

The unanimously approved resolution likely delays the council authorizing any U.N.-led peacekeeping force there for half a year. It urges African nations to provide financial support, personnel, equipment and services to the African Union peacekeeping force which started deploying in March 2007 to help stabilize Somalia.

The force in the Horn of Africa nation is authorized to have 8,000 troops, but now includes only 1,800 Ugandans and an advance team of almost 200 Burundians.

Somalia's transitional government and the 53-nation African Union, with far fewer resources than those of the United Nations, have been appealing to the council to speed up its planning for a possible takeover of peacekeeping operations.

"It's unlikely that an issue as complex as a peacekeeping effort in Somalia can be considered within the scope of just a couple of weeks," John Sawers, Britain's U.N. ambassador, told reporters after the council meeting.

"There's not been peace in Somalia, or stability in Somalia, for some 17 years. ... It's not surprising that the U.N. has not found it easy to come up with clear-cut recommendations on this," he said.

When the peacekeeping mission was first authorized in December 2006, it was the first time that the 15-nation council had agreed to intervene in war-wracked Somalia since the United States and U.N. troops left in March 1993.

Previous council resolutions empowered the AU peacekeeping force to protect the nation's leaders and train a local security force. The council has partly lifted an arms embargo, which had been in effect for more than a decade, so that African peacekeepers could arm themselves.

Somalia, an impoverished nation of 7 million, has been in chaos and run by a weak transitional government since dictator Mohamed Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991 by clan-based warlords who then turned on each other.

### *…and urges cease-fire in Darfur*

**UNITED NATIONS** (AP)—Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the Sudanese government and all rebel groups on Wednesday to agree to a cease-fire in Darfur, saying deteriorating security is undermining efforts to help thousands of civilians caught in an upsurge in fighting.

In his monthly report to the Security Council, Ban singled out attacks in West Darfur, which borders Chad. He also noted heightened tensions in camps for the displaced across Darfur, and continued banditry and vehicle hijackings—including 23 fully loaded U.N. World Food Program trucks between Jan. 1 and Jan. 24.

The secretary-general painted a grim picture of a worsening conflict seven weeks after a joint African Union-United Nations force took over peacekeeping duties in Darfur from a beleaguered 7,000-strong AU force, and a year after the U.N. and AU launched a new effort to get a political settlement.

Sudan's Arab-dominated government has been accused of unleashing the janjaweed militia of Arab nomads to commit atrocities against Darfur's ethnic African communities in the fight with rebel groups. At least 200,000 people have been killed and 2.2 million displaced since the fighting began five years ago.

Ban

The AU-U.N. force is authorized to have 26,000 troops and police, but Ban said only about 7,500 military personnel and 1,500 police officers were in Darfur on Jan. 31. He appealed to all countries that have pledged troops to expedite their deployment.

## Tunisian court upholds death sentence

**TUNIS, Tunisia** (AP)—A Tunisian appeals court has upheld a death sentence and rejected another against two suspected Islamic militants convicted in connection with deadly clashes with security officials.

Overall, convictions were held up against 30 people in the marathon appeals hearing over two days, following a lower court verdict in December.

The court on Wednesday confirmed a death sentence against Saber Ragoubi, 24, and reduced a death sentence against Imed Ben Ameur, 42, to life in prison.

They were convicted on charges including incitement to killing and "provoking disorder and death" as part of a terrorist plot.

Other sentences ranged from life behind bars to three years in prison on lesser charges, including possessing explosives.

The defendants could appeal again to the Court of Cassation, Tunisia's highest court, because of the severity of the sentences.

# Off the Wall

**EVERYDAY HERO** AP

Lurch, a 200-pound English Mastiff, plays at home in Unadilla Township, Mich, Feb. 3, 2008. Lurch earned the Livingston County American Red Cross's "Everyday Hero" designation for regularly donating blood to other dogs. Lurch shares the house with another Mastiff, four pugs and seven cats, as well as a few humans.

## OFFBEAT BRIEFS

### Man drives stolen car to police station

**ANDERSON, S.C.** (AP)—Authorities say a man drove a stolen car to the Anderson County Sheriff's Office to demand the return of nearly $2,000 officers seized from him during a drug arrest last June. Deputies said after they told Charles Chambers, 36, to leave Tuesday afternoon, an officer noticed he got into a car that matched the description of a vehicle stolen about three hours earlier. Another officer pulled the man over and told him to stop the car. The officer said Chambers stuck a screwdriver in the ignition to shut it off because the vehicle's key switch had been removed. Authorities say Chambers was charged with possession of a stolen automobile, driving under suspension and a tag violation.

### Our bill says what?

**LONDON** (AP)—First she waited 45 minutes to place her order. Then she waited more than an hour for the food. Then she saw the bill. Clare Watkin was out with a group of friends Friday at an Italian steak restaurant in the English town of Lichfield, about 125 miles north of London when she found "absolutely disgusting language" printed on her bill, the British Broadcasting Corp. reported. The BBC Web site carried what it said was a copy of the bill, with the message—a crude invitation to oral sex—printed between the cabernet sauvignon and the fish cakes. British media reported the company had apologized for the message, which it said was the result of a private joke between members of staff.

### $8,000? That's our water bill?

**LEXINGTON, Ky.** (AP)—A Danville family has received an $8,000 water bill for house they say they haven't lived in for more than two years. The granddaughters of Lurlene Gray say they are stuck with the high bill that covers part of January and February. Sherlene Tucker told WKYT in Lexington that she paid the last bill she received, about $35 to cover the period from October 9 through December 11. Tucker said her mother owns the house, but she went to a nursing home two years ago. The ground around the home isn't saturated and there are no apparent signs of a leak. Tucker says she was told by a water company employee that the $8,000 bill was not a clerical error.

### Hmmm. Thanks, for nothing...

**LAWRENCE, Mass.** (AP)—Congratulations! You're corrupt. That was the message on three wooden, gold embossed plaques sent from Puerto Rico to the Lawrence Police Department. The plaques delivered Sunday appeared to be awards, but accused officers, including Chief John Romero, of corruption. Romero estimated the plaques cost about $200 each to make and $75 to deliver. Police have dusted the plaques for fingerprints. They say they have a suspect in mind, but did not identify the person. Police have notified the postal inspector in Boston and the sender could face federal charges for using the Postal Service to "threaten, harass or intimidate."

### Meatloaf the cat heads home after trek

**PHOENIX** (AP)—A cat named Meatloaf who took a 3-week cross-country ride locked in a storage container is headed home to Florida. Arizona Humane Society officials say the 2-year-old gray cat apparently crawled into the large locker in Pompano Beach, Fla. as a man loaded it for a move to Phoenix. The container spent time in a Florida warehouse and on a semitrailer before being delivered to a company's Phoenix facility. A worker heard a cat meowing inside the container late Tuesday and found him hungry and thirsty but unharmed. The man who was moving remembered a similar cat near his old apartment. Meatloaf's owners had put up posters around their neighborhood and the apartment manager recalled them when Humane Society called.

### NYC bank lets wrong man withdraw $2M

**NEW YORK** (AP)—A man was charged with withdrawing $2 million from an account after a bank confused him with a man who has the same name. Benjamin Lovell was arraigned Tuesday on grand larceny charges. The 48-year-old salesman said he tried to tell officials at Commerce Bank in December that he did not have a $5 million account. Lovell said he was told it was his and he could withdraw the money. Prosecutors said the bank—which advertises itself as America's Most Convenient Bank—confused Lovell with a Benjamin Lovell who works for a property management company. The lesser-funded Lovell gave away some of the withdrawn money and blew some of it on gifts, but lost much of it on bad investments, prosecutors said.

# Science & Technology

## Service taps users to help filter sites

**NEW YORK** (AP)—You can now help decide what Web sites your boss should block.

A new service from OpenDNS lets users tag sites under categories such as "gambling," "hate" and "social networking." Others can weigh in on whether they agree with those classifications. If there are enough votes, the site gets added to a system used by companies, schools and other organizations to block access.

OpenDNS says its approach is better than commercial software because more people are reviewing sites and can do so quickly as new ones pop up.

**ON THE NET**

OpenDNS: http://www.opendns.com
Free Expression Policy Project: http://www.fepproject.org

OpenDNS already has a filtering system for "phishing" scam sites using a similar, community-based approach. It contracts with a vendor, St. Bernard Software, to filter pornography sites, and those sites will not be part of the new tagging program.

The system is free to use. The filters are part of OpenDNS' main service providing the directories necessary to translate a Web site's domain name into its actual numeric Internet address. OpenDNS estimates it has more than 4 million users worldwide.

John Palfrey, a professor of Internet law at Harvard University, said community-based filtering may prove more accurate overall, but he said users aren't always right.

"And when they are wrong, the crowds can function as high-tech lynch mobs," he said. "It is frontier justice, without recourse under classical law."

## Microsoft opens game development

**SAN FRANCISCO** (AP)—Microsoft Corp. said Wednesday it will make Xbox 360 video games developed by players available for download through the console's online service.

The new service will double the size of the Xbox 360 game library, to 1,000 games within a year of its launch, scheduled for this holiday season, the company said.

To distribute a game on the Xbox Live service, game creators must use Microsoft's XNA Game Studio software, which requires a $99 per-year subscription, or be an XNA Creators Club member. Each game will be vetted for quality and appropriateness by the online community itself.

Creators Club members will be able to test a beta version starting this spring.

In addition, Microsoft announced that game developers also will be able to build games for the software maker's Zune digital media players.

"The time has come for the games industry to open its doors to all game creators, enabling anyone to share their creations with the world," John Schappert, a vice president of gaming at Microsoft, told an audience of about 6,000 game developers at a San Francisco conference.

## Brain-reading headset to sell for $299

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Hands cramping up from too many video games?

How about controlling games with your thoughts instead? Later this year, Emotiv Systems Inc. plans to start selling the $299 EPOC neuroheadset to let you do just that.

The headset's sensors are designed to detect conscious thoughts and expressions as well as "non-conscious emotions" by reading electrical signals around the brain, says the company, which demonstrated the wireless gadget at the Game Developers Conference in San Francisco.

The company, which unveiled a prototype last year, says the headset can detect emotions such as anger, excitement and tension, as well as facial expressions and cognitive actions like pushing and pulling objects.

The headset will be sold with a game developed by Emotiv, but it can also be made to work with existing PC games, the company said. Users will also be able to access an online portal to play more games, chat or upload their own content such as music or photos.

## HELP FILE

By ROB PEGORARO
(c) 2008, The Washington Post

**Q. I use Windows' "Send To" right-click menu as a quick way to copy a file to a flash drive or attach it to an e-mail. How do I get rid of all its irrelevant options?**

**A.** This menu—one of the items that appear when you right-click on a file in Windows—can become a dumping ground for shortcuts left there by other programs.

Cleaning it up takes a little digging, though, because the folder that hides these shortcuts is itself hidden. In Windows XP or Vista, type "shell:sendto" into the address-bar space at the top of your documents window. (If you don't see that space in XP, go to the View menu, select Toolbars and then select "Address Bar.") You should then see a folder that lists files named after places and programs on your computer, not all of which you may care about.

For example, Windows puts links here to create a desktop shortcut or make a compressed archive from a selected file. Many third-party programs, such as disc-burning utilities and the Skype Internet-phone program, also leave traces here.

Delete the shortcuts you don't want, and you'll have a simpler and shorter "Send To" menu.

■■■

**Q. When I try to open iTunes on my PC, it says it cannot run because it has detected a problem with the audio configuration, and then quits.**

**A.** You need to reload QuickTime, the Apple media-playback software on which iTunes relies. Download a fresh copy (apple.com/quicktime), install that, and you should be fine.

If I may offer a suggestion to the iTunes developers: How about writing an error message that tells people how to fix this problem? The vague notice that users see now offers zero guidance about what to do, not even a link to the tech-support article on Apple's site explaining this issue.

# Life & Style

# Oral piercing: Is it worth it?

By BEVERLY CABANATAN, RDH, BS
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Piercing—much like tattooing—is just one of today's popular forms of "body art" and self-expression. Oral piercing is not a new phenomenon. In fact, history points to the Mayans, some of whom pierced their tongues to demonstrate courage and virility. The Aleuts and Eskimos sometimes pierced the lips of female infants as part of a purification ritual and the mandibular (lower) lips of boys to signify part of the passage into puberty. In some Third World countries, oral piercing are customs that continue to be practiced for religious, sexual, tribal, or marital significance.

Piercing may seem cool, daring, and totally safe because some celebrities use body piercing to display their particular style or attitude. Trendy fashion magazines and music videos will advertise it—that is until it's no longer deemed the "in thing" and something else comes along to replace it. Piercing is no doubt growing among Western culture.

However, piercing the tongue, lips, checks, or the uvula (the tiny tissue that hangs at the back of the throat), is not as safe as some would have you believe. That's because of your mouth's moist environment. It's home to huge amounts of breeding bacteria and is an ideal place for infection. If you're thinking of about getting a piercing or if you already have one or more, there are some health risks that you should know about.

A mouth piercing can interfere with speech, chewing, or swallowing. That may seem like a mere inconvenience until you consider that it may also cause:

- Excessive drooling
- Infection, pain, and swelling
- Chipped or cracked teeth
- Injuries to the gums
- Damage to fillings
- Increased salivary flow
- Hypersensitivity to metals
- Scar tissue
- Nerve damage

The harmful effects can happen during the piercing, soon after, or even long after the procedure.

An infection can quickly become life threatening if it's not treated promptly. For example, oral piercing carries a potential risk of Endocarditis, an inflammation of the heart valves or tissues. Bacteria can enter the bloodstream through the piercing site in the mouth and travel to the heart, where it can colonize on heart abnormalities. This is a risk for people with heart conditions and in the worst cases results in death.

After a piercing, the tongue may swell. There have been reports of swelling serious enough to block the airway. And it's very possible to puncture a nerve during a tongue piercing. If this happens, you may experience a "numb" tongue, which indicates nerve damage that is sometimes temporary and sometimes permanent. The injured nerve may affect your sense of taste, or how you move your mouth.

Just touching your mouth jewelry (tongue barbells and lip and cheek labrettes) can lead to infection. Believe it or not, people who have piercings constantly touch them—which is a perfect opportunity for bacteria from hands to enter piercing sites.

Oral piercing is not a new phenomenon. In fact, history points to the Mayans, some of whom pierced their tongues to demonstrate courage and virility.

The hoop, ring, stud, and barbell shaped jewelry can also hinder your ability to talk and eat. And food particles that collect around piercing sites can lead to infection. Some people have even swallowed the jewelry, which can puncture the bowel or intestine.

Some people also develop a habit of "biting" the barbells or "playing" with the balls which can lead to cracked, scratched teeth: gum damage and recession; and sensitive teeth. Sometimes, uncomfortable, protruding scar tissue can form around the piercing site from the stress of the metal against the inside of your tooth.

However, if you already have an oral piercing, here are a few tips. Contact your dentist or physician immediately with any signs of infection such as swelling, pain, fever, shaking, or red-streaked appearance around the site of the piercing. Keep the site clean and free of any matter that may collect on the jewelry by using a mouthrinse after every meal. Minimize "clicking" the jewelry against teeth and avoid undue stress on the piercing site. Check the tightness of your jewelry periodically with clean hands because beads loosen on their threads. Checking can help prevent you from swallowing or choking on your jewelry.

Unfortunately, many young people with oral piercings don't realize that these frightening side effects could happen to them. So consider removing your the mouth jewelry and let your healthy smile make your fashion statement.

*Beverly Cabanatan, RDH, BS is a registered licensed oral hygienist at the Seventh Day Adventist Dental Clinic. The American Dental Hygiene Association and the Seventh-day Adventist Dental Clinic are celebrating the month of February as children's dental health month.*

# Mining wealth from the pages of a book

By DAVID L. ULIN
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

There's an old joke of sorts—attributed to Norman Mailer, or maybe it was Hemingway—about how writers should respond when studios start sniffing around their work. "Drive to California," the punch line goes, "throw your book over the state line, and wait for them to throw the money back."

Here we have a cautionary tale, about the corrupting influence of Hollywood, the way the industry will take first your art and then your soul. Yet it also offers a more philosophical message, having to do with the ambiguous place writers hold in the movie business, the century-long push and pull between words and film.

For the last few months, the relationship of writers to Hollywood has been a loaded subject, no matter what side of the picket lines you were on. It's telling, however, that even during the height of the strike by the Writers Guild of America, book writers somehow remained marginalized.

In a Jan. 28 post on the National Book Critics Circle blog Critical Mass, former San Francisco Chronicle Style Editor Paul Wilner lamented that at the Screen Actors Guild Awards, "Almost no actual writers were acknowledged for their contributions (to the winning films)."

LOS ANGELES TIMES

More novel-based films, like Persepolis 2, are daring to reflect the complexities of their source.

"I waited in vain to hear ... Cormac McCarthy mentioned in conjunction with the multiple honors for `No Country for Old Men,'" Wilner wrote, "or a nod to ... Alice Munro for the short story upon which `Away From Her' was based. ... Daniel Day-Lewis' tribute to Heath Ledger was moving, but somehow Upton Sinclair's role as the progenitor of `There Will Be Blood' was not noted. (The film was inspired by his 1927 novel `Oil!')"

This is an old story; Ken Kesey, Wilner notes, went unacknowledged when "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" won the best picture Oscar in 1976, and 19 years later, Winston Groom was similarly slighted after "Forrest Gump" took the top prize.

Such a disconnect is particularly notable this year because so many films, nominated and otherwise, have roots in literary work. Not only are there "No Country for Old Men" and "Away From Her," but "The Namesake" and "Atonement"; not only "There Will Be Blood," but "Persepolis." Literature even figures into "The Savages" and "Margot at the Wedding," which deal, in part, with the struggle to come to terms with writing, its odd and at times parasitic connection to the world.

What does this signify? I have a friend who believes people tend not to trust something that lacks an established lineage, that there is a cachet—for producer and audience—in a film that comes from an iconic book.

Sure, movies have been inspired by books since the beginning: Georges Melies' 1902 film "A Trip to the Moon" was based on Jules Verne's "From the Earth to the Moon" and H.G. Wells' "The First Men in the Moon." But how many times has a great book been made into an awful movie? Or a mediocre novel fueled a classic film? Think of "The Godfather" or "Being There," both of which were transfigured brilliantly by adaptation. Then consider all the literary masterpieces ("Under the Volcano," "Last Exit to Brooklyn," "Naked Lunch") that have died on-screen.

## BEST SELLERS

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### FICTION

***The Appeal***, by John Grisham (Doubleday: $27.95) A billionaire enlists political help to kill a $41-million jury award over toxic waste dumping.

***Duma Key***, by Stephen King (Scribner: $28) A man takes up painting as therapy, only to discover his canvases have an uncontrollable power over him.

***The Reserve***, by Russell Banks (HarperCollins: $24.94) Romance among the elite and troubled in the Adirondacks of the 1930s.

***People of the Book***, by Geraldine Brooks (Viking: $25.95) A rare-books expert traces the history of a priceless Jewish tome to 15th century Spain.

***The Senator's Wife***, by Sue Miller (Knopf: $24.95) A bride learns from a politician's long-suffering spouse.

***A Version of the Truth***, by Jennifer Kaufman and Karen Mack (Delacorte: $24) A woman falls in love with her boss.

***Beautiful Children***, by Charles Bock (Random House: $25) A comic book illustrator and his stripper wife search Las Vegas for their 12-year-old son.

***Three Shirt Deal***, by Stephen J. Cannell (St. Martin's: $24.95) Shane Scully tries to save a convict whose murder confession was coerced.

***Plum Lucky***, by Janet Evanovich (St. Martin's: $17.95) Stephanie Plum's latest caper involves a big bag of money, plus-size modeling and a case of hives.

***Blasphemy***, by Douglas Preston (Forge: $25.95) Scientists at the world's largest super-collider uncover secrets to the world's future and past.

### NONFICTION

***In Defense of Food***, by Michael Pollan (Penguin Press: $21.95) A look at dietary sacred cows.

***The Dangerous Book for Boys***, by Conn and Hal Iggulden (HarperCollins: $24.95) Learn how to tie knots, find true north and other skills.

***Born Standing Up***, by Steve Martin (Scribner: $25) The comedian reflects on the evolution of his art.

***The Secret***, by Rhonda Byrne (Beyond Words: $23.95) Life's secrets distilled from oral tradition, literature, religion and philosophy.

***Tom Cruise***, by Andrew Morton (St. Martin's: $25.95) An unauthorized biography on the movie megastar.

***The Daring Book for Girls***, by Andrea J. Buchanan and Miriam Peskowitz (HarperCollins: $24.95) A girls' handbook of must-have knowledge and skills.

***Become a Better You***, by Joel Osteen (Free Press: $25) Change through prayer and good habits.

***The Mind of the Market***, by Michael Shermer (Times Books: $26) How evolution has shaped our capitalist, consumer-oriented economy.

***Musicophilia***, by Oliver Sacks (Knopf: $26) The medical storyteller explores the link between music and its myriad effects on the human brain.

***I Am America***, by Stephen Colbert (Grand Central: $26.99) The Colbert Report star expounds on the forces destroying the country.

# Coen's 'No Country' could make Oscar history

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP MOVIE WRITER

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—You know it is a weird year at the Academy Awards when the Coen brothers are not only front-runners, but potential history-makers.

After 23 years as oddballs whose films occasionally click with broader audiences, on Sunday night Joel and Ethan Coen could become the first filmmakers to win four Oscars for one movie, with their crime thriller "No Country for Old Men."

They would be the first siblings to win the directing honor and only the second duo to share Hollywood's top filmmaking honor, following Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins for 1961's "West Side Story."

And they would tie the record of four Oscars won in a single year held by one of Hollywood's most mainstream figures, Walt Disney, a quadruple winner for 1953 as producer of three short-subject winners and the documentary recipient.

The Coens share a best-picture nomination as producers of "No Country for Old Men," a zigzagging tale that captures the bleak beauty of the west Texas landscape and seamlessly blends vicious violence with absurd humor. They also have nominations for directing, adapted screenplay and editing under the pseudonym Roderick Jaynes.

Since their 1984 debut "Blood Simple," another crime story set in Texas, the Coens have established themselves as curious cousins to big Hollywood, delivering some films with solid yet modest box-office returns and others, such as "The Hudsucker Proxy," that are mainly for the Coen faithful.

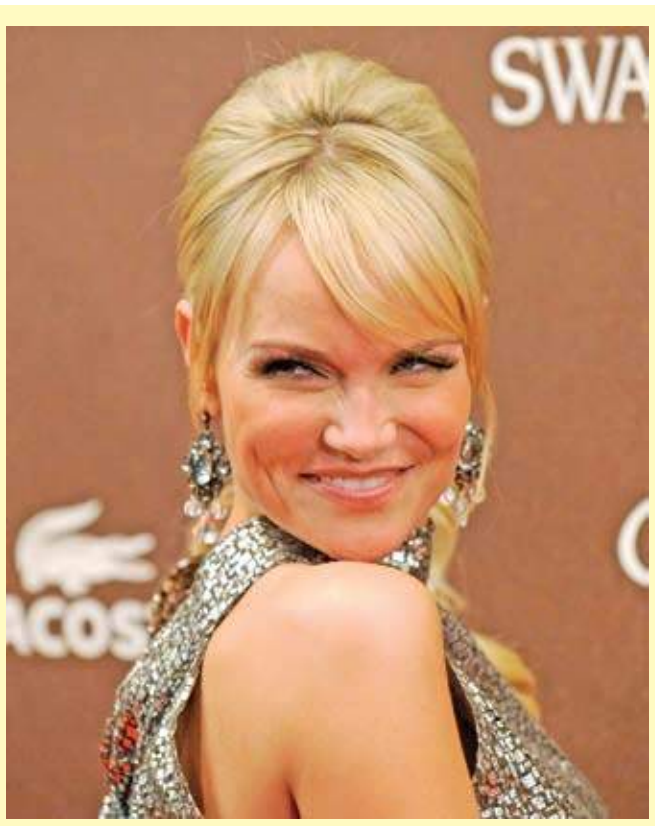
"What they manifest is a full-blown roller coaster instead of some linear idea of escapism," said "No Country" co-star Josh Brolin. "When you go see a Coens movie, it's not that at all. You're totally involved and yet you're doing things and reacting to things that are constantly surprising you."

Adapted from Cormac McCarthy's novel, "No Country" centers on three men: A resourceful Texan (Brolin) who makes off with a satchel of cash

*See COEN on Page 31*

AP

Filmakers Ethan Coen, left and Joel Coen, are shown in Los Angeles, in this Nov. 4, 2007, file photo.



AP

Kristen Chenoweth arrives at the 10th Annual Costume Designers Guild Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif., in this Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2008 file photo.

## Broadway star prepares for Oscar performance

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Sets are being built. A stretch of Hollywood Boulevard is closed. Rehearsals have begun. With the writers strike finally in the rearview mirror, round-the-clock preparations are under way for Sunday's Academy Awards.

On Tuesday, Oscar's head honchos traded their offices at the Kodak Theatre for seats inside the landmark Capitol Records building, where conductor Bill Conti and his 61-piece orchestra practiced the year's nominated songs. Joining them was Broadway star Kristin Chenoweth and singer Marlon Saunders, who are set to perform "That's How You Know" from the movie "Enchanted."

Chenoweth, a Tony Award winner and film and TV star, said it's "nerve-racking" to prepare for the Oscar stage.

"It's the biggest audience I've ever had," the 4-foot, 11-inch (1.5 meter-tall), performer with the outsized voice told The Associated Press. "I've played many of the famous concert halls in the world but this is something altogether different. I'm just going to try to perform the song and make it about the music and not get too nervous."

Her nerves didn't show during the rehearsal. The diminutive star even warmed up with an operatic aria that drew applause from the orchestra's brass section, which filled half the room. The other half held the strings section and 16 backup singers. Conti wielded his baton from the center as Chenoweth and Saunders donned headphones inside individual glass booths.

Show producer Gil Cates and director Louis J. Horvitz, along with associate producer

*See BROADWAY on Page 31*


*Un Dangkulo Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase*

We, the family of the late

George Peter Untalan Diaz,

wish to express our humble gratitude to all our relatives and friends who have faithfully stood by us during our time of bereavement.

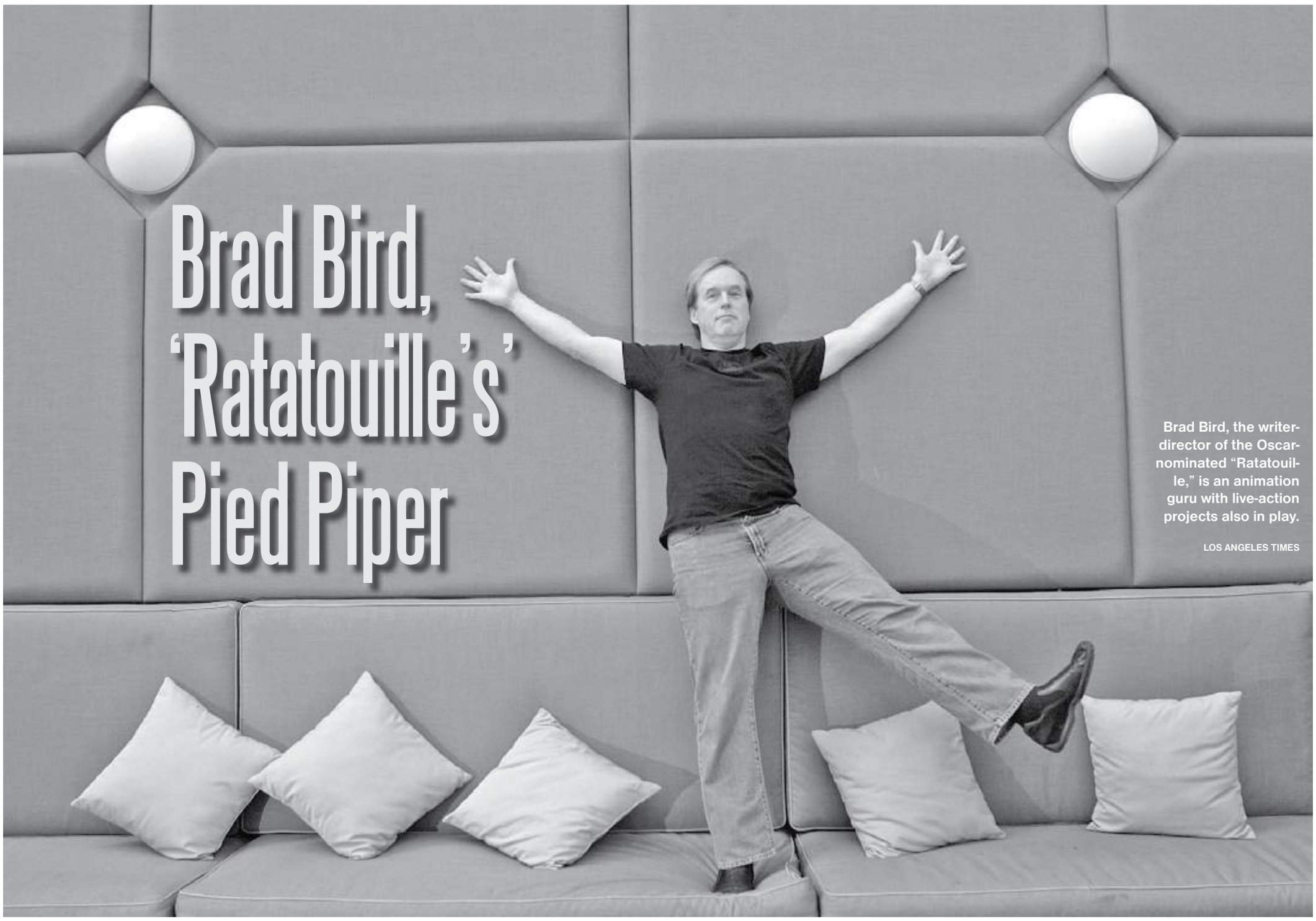
We wish to give special thanks to: His Excellency Bishop Tomas Camacho, members of the clergy of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa, ICU doctors, respiratory therapists, physical therapists and nurses of the Commonwealth Health Center, Dr. Lamar, Department of Public Safety, United States Postal Service, Rotary Club of Saipan and the techa (Alice "Bodig" Deleon Guerrero).

We would also like to thank all who traveled from afar to see him in Saipan and those who prayed for and attended the services on Saipan and Guam.

To our family and friends, we will always treasure your kind expressions of sympathy and consolation in our hearts.

*"Until we meet again"*

# Brad Bird, 'Ratatouille's' Pied Piper



Brad Bird, the writer-director of the Oscar-nominated "Ratatouille," is an animation guru with live-action projects also in play.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

By RACHEL ABRAMOWITZ
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

**HOLLYWOOD**—Remy, "c'est moi"?

It's hard not to think that when meeting Brad Bird, "Ratatouille's" writer-director. He thoroughly identifies with his rat protagonist Remy, who yearns to be a chef in the heretofore unwelcoming kitchen of the legendary French restaurant Gusteau. Remy, an unsung artist with a sensational sense of smell, is a misfit in his tribe of rats. Before a gun-wielding grandma dislodged his rat community from its bucolic perch in the French countryside, Remy's father had consigned him to a life of sniffing out poison.

Bird was one of Hollywood's unsung talents until his 40s, a guy who impressed the likes of Pixar kingpin John Lasseter, Steven Spielberg and Simpsons creator Matt Groenig, but still toiled in relative anonymity.

His relative under-appreciation goes all the way back to his childhood in Oregon, when he'd trot home from school every day and spend hours holed up drawing. At 3, he drew Boinky—a boxy rabbit—in sequential pictures. At 11, he began drawing animation in earnest, and at 14, he completed his first film, a topsy-turvy version of "The Tortoise and the Hare," in which the slow and steady tortoise is the villain trying to subvert the speedy hare.

Nonetheless, his junior high guidance counselor tried to talk him out of a life in the movies. He asked Bird over and over again, "What do you want to do with your life?"

"I said, 'I want to make movies,'" recalls Bird. "We had a half-hour discussion where he kept trying to get me to say what else I would be interested in doing. He'd say, 'If movies didn't exist, what would you do?' And I'd say, 'I'd have to invent them.'"

Bird tells the story the way a veteran animator would: with all the appropriate voices. He's stern as the evil counselor, guileless as his teenage self. He returns to his present self for the moral: "That, in a nutshell, is the message sent to a lot of people who want to have a career in the arts. It's considered impractical, a far-fetched thing. To have a goal, something that excites you, that everybody else thinks is crazy—I relate to that."

Bird is sitting in a hotel lounge in Westwood a couple of hours before "Ratatouille" sweeps the Annies, animation's top award. He looks like a Little Rascal gone middle-aged, with reddish hair, freckles and an impish grin—along with the thickening midriff of a soccer dad. His youthful chutzpah has matured into a zesty confidence. And why not? In 2005, Bird won a best animated feature Oscar for "The Incredibles," for which he was also nominated in the screenplay category, and this year, he's received the same nominations for "Ratatouille."

While Hollywood mints "star" directors from every video helmer who churns out a hit, animation, the billion-dollar war horse, remains largely a starless fiefdom, where the public barely knows who's responsible for such cultural icons as Shrek or Nemo.

One exception is Pixar's creative kingpin John Lasseter, who also directed "Toy Story" and "Cars." The other is Bird, the business' fast-rising auteur—who's somehow managed to imprint his distinctly personal stamp on the CG world through the dazzlingly precise and cinematic verve of his animation as well as his idiosyncratic sense of humor and unusual ability to imbue mere drawings with vibrant personalities.

Bird writes his own material, and the voices in "Ratatouille" are enhancements, not crutches. Furthermore, the story is largely told from the perspective of a small rat—it's as if a camera is attached to Remy's collar as he scampers through Gusteau's kitchen, perennially threatened by flying knives, simmering saucepans and maniacal chefs. As Remy is seduced by the kitchen, the palette of Gusteau's kingdom becomes softer, inviting, irresistible.

And Bird is fast. There are sequences in his films that literally move faster than almost any other studio-scale animation. He's also fast in another way. Despite his deep identification with Remy, "Ratatouille" was not in fact Bird's idea, but that of co-director Jan Pinkava, who had been working on "Ratatouille" since at least 2000.

When the movie stalled, Bird was asked to take it over—and was able to completely retool the script and finish the project within a year and a half, not the four years it usually takes to make an animated film.

Bird began his professional apprenticeship early. Still a teenager, he sent his cinematic retelling of "The Tortoise and the Hare" to Disney, where it ended up at the animation department still run by the nine grand old men who'd created such classics as "Snow White." Bird wound up spending every vacation flying to Los Angeles to study with Milt Kahl, revered as the finest draftsman of the Disney animators.

At the California Institute of the Arts in the Los Angeles area, he befriended other budding animators such as Lasseter and Tim Burton and studied Disney greats like "Dumbo" frame by frame. He worked briefly at Disney, then directed an animated episode of Steven Spielberg's "Amazing Stories" and wound up on the crew of "The Simpsons."

There were many opportunities to direct, but all foundered at the finish line until the 1999 animated film "Iron Giant," based on a book by poet Ted Hughes. Set amid the Cold War paranoia of the 1950s, the hand-drawn film tells of a lonely boy who befriends an enormous iron robot who's fallen from space. "The Iron Giant" received great reviews but flopped commercially, and after years of ignoring his pal Lasseter's entreaties, Bird moved to Pixar.

When tackling "Ratatouille," one of Bird's first insights was to embrace the "ick factor" inherent in the story of a rat infiltrating a four-star kitchen. The previous "Ratatouille" team had tried to finesse this by making the rats more human, but Bird wanted them to embrace Remy's outer—and inner—rodent.

"You can buy the fantasy of a rat wanting to cook if there are moments when he feels like a real rat," Bird explains. "We studied a lot of footage of real rats. We saw that they lead with their noses because their eyesight isn't the greatest. We showed that particularly on Remy. We thought it was good for someone primarily concerned with the senses to be led by his nose."

Before Bird's arrival, all the rats had walked on two feet like humans, but Bird decided to "re-rig them to be on all fours." Indeed in the film, when Remy's brother asks him why he's suddenly walking upright, the rat-artist explains that a chef needs to keep his hands clean. Remy's posture becomes a barometer of the character's inner life.

"If he feels exuberant, he tends to be more upright, and his hands pulled back " says Bird, "Later on, when he feels shame in front of his father, and (his dreams) have all turned into disaster, he folds back in again. It's not just a mannerism. It's a thing that helps tell the story."

"There are a million decisions like that in the course of making a film," adds Bird—though perhaps there will be fewer in the future. His next project, "1906," is a live-action drama set in the San Francisco earthquake of that year. "I'm just resuming what I was doing before ('Ratatouille,')" he says. "I love film. I have as many live-action projects that didn't get made as animated projects that didn't get made. I'm not one of these people who can't wait to get out of animation into 'real filmmaking.' "

Like many animators, he's slightly touchy about the medium getting the respect he feels it deserves. "If you were to ask me if I think 'Snow White' was one of the best films of 1937, yes I do. I think it was nice that it got a cute little Oscar with seven little Oscars. I think it should maybe have been nominated for a real one."

## COEN

*From Page 29*

from a drug deal gone bad; his pursuer, a relentless killer (Javier Bardem) with an inhuman detachment and a bizarre hairdo vaguely reminiscent of Moe Howard's from the Three Stooges; and the sheriff (Tommy Lee Jones) tracking both men, who finds himself on a case so inexplicable in its savagery that it shatters his flintlike mettle.

Of course, it would not be a Coen brothers movie if there were not some wicked laughs. And while the story begins as a straightforward chase thriller, it veers wildly into unexpected places and moments of puzzling ambiguity.

The Coens, who often finish each other's sentences, describe the story's appeal this way:

Ethan Coen: "Not that in and of itself it kind of goes off the track you think it's on, but the way it goes off the track is not..."

Joel Coen: "... arbitrary..."

Ethan Coen: "...arbitrary. It's pointed. There is a point to it, so it's satisfying in a way that it wouldn't be if it were arbitrary."

With eight nominations, "No Country for Old Men" tied for the Oscar lead with fellow best-picture nominee "There Will Be Blood," an oil-boom saga that rivals the Coens' flick for weirdness, barbarity and black humor.

Two more conventional Oscar contenders, the historical drama "Atonement" and the legal tale "Michael Clayton," are right behind with seven nominations. The teen-pregnancy comedy "Juno" earned four nominations, including the fifth best-picture slot.

Past Oscar winners Daniel Day-Lewis of "There Will Be Blood" and Julie Christie of the Alzheimer's drama "Away From Her" are solid bets to win again in the lead-acting categories, though Christie faces strong competition from Marion Cotillard, who stars as singer Edith Piaf in the film biography "La Vie En Rose."

It is a strong and varied Oscar lineup, but expectations are that the Coens will rule the show. Along with the Coens' four personal nominations, Bardem is favored to win the supporting-actor honor for "No Country."

The Coens have been embraced by Hollywood's most-exclusive club before, winning the Oscar for original screenplay with 1996's "Fargo." Yet coming into the biggest night in show business as favored sons is a strange position for two filmmakers who always have followed their own eerie muse.

The Coens' eccentric stories include tales of a barber who dreams of becoming a dry cleaner ("The Man Who Wasn't There"), a playwright with writer's block who may or may not be the keeper of a severed head in a box ("Barton Fink"), and a childless couple that kidnaps one of five quintuplets figuring the parents had babies to spare ("Raising Arizona").

At $60 million (€40.7 million) and counting, "No Country" is the Coens' biggest box-office draw, topping the $45.5 million (€30.86 million) gross of "O Brother Where Art Thou." Their films have another life, though, striking cultural chords beyond the theater.

With its earthy soundtrack, "O Brother" won the Grammy for best album of the year and helped usher in a rediscovery of American roots music.

Their 1998 comedy "The Big Lebowski," about an overgrown slacker named the Dude who lives for bowling and gets more than he bargained for when seeking compensation for his urine-damaged rug, has spawned its own counterculture that includes fan festivals and T-shirts proclaiming the lead character's laid-back approach to life: "The Dude abides."

The harmless existentialism of the Dude, played by Jeff Bridges, could be the mirror to the cold-blooded variety of Bardem's "No Country" killer Anton Chigurh. He seems to come from nowhere, existing to kill without mercy, occasionally letting victims determine if they will live or die by a coin toss.

Anton is something of a Martian, a presence from elsewhere inexplicably bearing terror and death.

"The whole idea of the man who fell to Earth is sort of what we tried to get across in his introduction to the movie. He's just coming out of the landscape," Joel Coen said. "You make him both the implacable killer, but you imbue him with sort of recognizable humanity at a certain level that makes him even scarier."

Bardem views Anton as "a man who has an earplug, and he's talking to you, but at the same time, he's hearing a soccer game, so when you're talking to him, you don't know where he is. 'Are you here or are you there?'

"Instead of a soccer game, it could be God or fate that he's talking to, so that would be the insane part. That along with the haircut will create a kind of insanity and uncomfortableness for the person he's looking at."

There's one big question should the Coens sweep all four of their categories come Oscar night: Will the real Roderick Jaynes be there to collect his editing prize? The Coens describe their alias as a cranky geezer in his late 80s who lives in England and does not like to travel.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences acknowledges the Coens as quadruple nominees even though their names are not on the ballot for editing.

So who gets the trophy if Roderick Jaynes wins?

"We're going to read the name on the card," said academy spokeswoman Leslie Unger. "Who comes up remains to be seen."

# Cast changes in store for 'Law & Order'

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Jesse L. Martin is putting down his "Law & Order" detective's shield, and Anthony Anderson is in negotiations to pick it up.

Martin, who has been with the NBC drama since fall 1999, will film an episode to air this spring explaining the departure of his character, New York police Detective Ed Green, a person familiar with the show said Wednesday.

Anderson is concluding negotiations to join the cast as a new partner for Detective Cyrus Lupo, played by Jeremy Sisto, said the person, who wasn't authorized to announce the change and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Martin is set to play Marvin Gaye in "Sexual Healing," a movie biography of the ill-fated singer, with James Gandolfini ("The Sopranos") costarring. Filming on the project from Gandolfini's production company is to begin this spring, according to trade paper reports.

Anderson recently starred in the Fox TV series "K-Ville." His other credits include FX's "The Shield" and the films "The Departed" and "Transformers."

Martin once took a break from "Law & Order" to star in the 2005 film version of "Rent," the Broadway version of which he appeared in.

## BROADWAY

*From Page 29*

Michael Seligman and talent coordinator Danette Herman, watched from soft sofas in the adjacent mixing room. The song was recorded so the singers could get a sense of their performance when backed by the orchestra.

"I have one bad note," Chenoweth confessed as she finished a take. "I had a big crack."

She listened to the playback and cringed when she heard the offending note. They tried it again.

"Very good. Very good," Cates told her. "I just love hearing you sing. It's superb."

Chenoweth smiled and curtsied in response.

She was invited just weeks ago to perform the song and had to learn it in a hurry. The composer and writer, Steven Schwartz and Alan Menken, who are nominated for three of their "Enchanted" tunes, are colleagues of hers from Broadway.

"If they're happy, I'll be happy," she said.

But first she's got to deal with those nerves.

"I'm trying to think of it like another gig, even though I know it's not the Met or Carnegie Hall. It's the Oscars and it's several billion people," she said, pretending to gag at the overwhelmingness of it all.

"I'm really excited about my dress and I'm really excited about the whole night. Of course I'm rooting for anything from 'Enchanted' to win."


In Humble Gratitude

†Jesus Barcinas Agulto

April 11, 1941 – February 5, 2008

Words cannot adequately express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all our relatives and friends for the kind words of expression given to us on the passing away of our beloved †Jesus.

Thank you for sharing our sorrow. Your most comforting expressions of sympathy, kindness, prayers and thoughtfulness are more deeply appreciated than words of thanks can ever express.

Our special thanks to Bishop Tomas A. Camacho, Fr. Ray, Fr. Bong, Fr. Jesse Reyes, Borja Funeral Services, Cabrera Funeral Services, techa Carlene DLG Hofschneider, CHC Dialysis Unit, nurses and doctors, D Section staff, Maggie Cabrera, and the choir.

To all–all who have helped us in one way or another, please be assured that you will always be remembered in our thoughts and prayers.

May God Bless Us All.

Thank You and Dankulu Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

**Dolores M. Agulto & Family**
**Eloy & Dolores Inos and family**
**Joe & Francine Agulto and family**
**Modesta & Pedro Bartolo and family**
**Jesus/Neng Masga and family**

# Winehouse, McCartney play at Brit Awards

**LONDON** (AP)—Amy Winehouse and Paul McCartney set their recent troubles aside to steal the show Wednesday at the Brit Awards, the British music industry's most prestigious prizes.

Rockers Foo Fighters and British bands Take That and Arctic Monkeys were all double winners at Britain's equivalent of the Grammys.

Although she wasn't up for any awards, troubled retro-soul diva Winehouse received a rapturous reception when she appeared to perform "Valerie" with Mark Ronson. She followed that up with the sultry ballad "Love is a Losing Game" from her breakthrough album "Back to Black."

Winehouse, who appeared composed and confident, urged the crowd at Earl's Court arena to "make some noise for my Blake." Winehouse's husband, Blake Fielder-Civil, is in prison awaiting trial for assault and lying to police.

Winehouse, 24, has had a tumultuous 12 months since she was named best female British act at last year's Brits. She won five Grammys earlier this month - a rare high point in a year of erratic behavior, canceled concerts, tabloid headlines and a spell in drug rehab.

McCartney, who has spent the last week in court trying to settle his acrimonious divorce from Heather Mills, closed the show with a crowd-pleasing medley of hits, including "Hey Jude" and "Live and Let Die" - a song he co-wrote with his late first wife Linda.

Accepting a lifetime achievement award, the former Beatle said: "I just think British music is the best."

Grown-up boy band Take That took the British single of the year prize for its song "Shine" and also was named best live act.

The band - which split in 1996 but reformed a decade later minus original member Robbie Williams - joked about its members' advancing years.

"I'm 37 years old, I've got an arthritic knee," band member Jason Orange said.

The spiky pop quartet Arctic Monkeys was named British group of the year and also took the British album of the year prize for "Favourite Worst Nightmare."

Performer-producer Ronson, who has worked with Winehouse, Christina Aguilera and Jay-Z, was named British male solo act.

"I've never felt so British or male in my entire life," said Ronson, who divides his time between New York and London.

The British female solo artist trophy went to singer-songwriter Kate Nash, while Beirut-born, London-raised Mika, whose flamboyant vocal style has been likened to Queen's Freddie Mercury, was named British breakthrough act.

Kanye West and Kylie Minogue were named international solo acts of the year. Foo Fighters took prizes for international group and international album of the year for "Echoes Silence Patience & Grace."

The show, hosted by rock elder statesman Ozzy Osbourne and his family, was largely free of surprises.

Performers at the show included Kaiser Chiefs, Minogue and R&B star Rihanna, who sang her song "Umbrella" with the British band Klaxons.

The awards are run by the British Phonographic Industry Ltd., an industry association. Most winners are selected by a vote of more than 1,000 industry members, including representatives from record companies, the media, retailers, record producers, disc jockeys and promoters.

The British single, British breakthrough act and British live act prizes are decided by public phone or online voting.

AP

British singer Amy Winehouse performs at the Brit Awards 2008 in London, Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2008.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Vantage Point

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friday | | 4:15 | 7:00 | 9:45 |
| Saturday | 1:10 | 4:15 | 7:00 | 9:45 |
| Sunnday | 1:10 | 4:15 | 7:00 | |
| Mon thru Thurs | | 4:15 | 7:00 | |

Dennis Quaid, Forest Whitaker
Drama, Thriller • Rated PG13

Synopsis

Thomas Barnes and Kent Taylor are two Secret Service agents assigned to protect President Ashton at a landmark summit on the global war on terror. When President Ashton is shot moments after his arrival in Spain, chaos ensues and disparate lives collide. In the crowd is Howard Lewis, an American tourist videotaping the historic event to show his kids when he returns home. Also there is Rex, an American TV news producer who is reporting on the conference.

Witless Protection

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friday | | 4:25 | 7:10 | 9:35 |
| Saturday | 1:25 | 4:25 | 7:10 | 9:35 |
| Sunnday | 1:25 | 4:25 | 7:10 | |
| Mon thru Thurs | | 4:25 | 7:10 | |

Larry the Cable Guy, Ivana Milicevic
Comedy, Crime • Rated PG13

Untraceable

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friday | | 4:30 | 7:05 | 9:55 |
| Saturday | 1:30 | 4:30 | 7:05 | 9:55 |
| Sunnday | 1:30 | 4:30 | 7:05 | |
| Mon thru Thurs | | 4:30 | 7:05 | |

Diane Lane, Billy Burke
Drama, Thriller, Crime • Rated R

★ ★ ★

The Spiderwick Chronicles

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friday | | 4:00 | 7:20 | 9:30 |
| Saturday | 1:00 | 4:00 | 7:20 | 9:30 |
| Sunnday | 1:00 | 4:00 | 7:20 | |
| Mon thru Thurs | | 4:00 | 7:20 | |

Seth Rogen, Mary-Loise Parker
Fantasy, Children • Rated PG13

Synopsis

Peculiar things start to happen the moment the Grace family (Jared, his twin brother Simon, sister Mallory and their mom) leave New York and move into the secluded old house owned by their great, great uncle Arthur Spiderwick. Unable to explain the strange disappearances and accidents that seem to be happening on a daily basis, the family blames Jared. When he, Simon and Mallory investigate what's really going on, they uncover the fantastic truth of the Spiderwick estate and of the creatures that inhabit it.

Fool's Gold

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friday | | 4:10 | 7:15 | 10:00 |
| Saturday | 1:20 | 4:10 | 7:15 | 10:00 |
| Sunnday | 1:20 | 4:10 | 7:15 | |
| Mon thru Thurs | | 4:10 | 7:15 | |

Matthew McConaughey, Kate Hudson
Action, Adventure • Rated PG13

Jumper

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friday | | 4:05 | 7:25 | 9:40 |
| Saturday | 1:05 | 4:05 | 7:25 | 9:40 |
| Sunnday | 1:05 | 4:05 | 7:25 | |
| Mon thru Thurs | | 4:05 | 7:25 | |

Hayden Christensen, Samuel L. Jackson
Adventure, Sci-Fi • Rated PG13

Meet the Spartans

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friday | | 4:20 | @ | @ |
| Saturday | 1:15 | 4:20 | @ | @ |
| Sunnday | 1:15 | 4:20 | @ | |
| Mon thru Thurs | | 4:20 | @ | |

Diedrich Bader, Kevin Sorbo
Comedy • Rated PG13

Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friday | | @ | 7:30 | 9:50 |
| Saturday | @ | @ | 7:30 | 9:50 |
| Sunnday | @ | @ | 7:30 | |
| Mon thru Thurs | | @ | 7:30 | |

Martin Lawrence, Louis C.K.
Comedy • Rated PG13

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# Judge questions moving Spears' case

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—A federal judge wants an attorney who claims to represent Britney Spears to explain why he believes her conservatorship belongs in federal court.

Attorney Jon Eardley argues that the terms of the conservatorship, which occurs when a court determines someone cannot take care of themselves or their affairs, violate the pop star's civil rights.

Judge Philip Gutierrez on Tuesday ordered Eardley to explain by Feb. 29 why the federal court should intervene in a probate case. The order came after attorneys for Spears' father, James Spears, who was named her temporary conservator Feb. 1, argued in a motion that the conservatorship should remain in state court.

James Spears' team argued that a state Superior Court commissioner had previously found that the singer did not have the capacity to retain counsel, and that conservatorship matters do not fall under federal jurisdiction.

Eardley filed papers Thursday to move Spears' probate case to federal court. A message left at his office Wednesday was not returned.

AP

Singer Britney Spears poses on the press line at the Scandinavian Style Mansion party in Los Angeles in this Dec. 1, 2007, file photo.

The commissioner placed Spears under a conservatorship after she was taken to a psychiatric hospital twice this year. Her father and attorney Andrew Wallet were named co-conservators of her estate.

Attorney Jeffrey Wexler also asked the judge to require Eardley to pay James Spears' attorney fees and any extra expenses incurred from arguments over the request to move the case to federal court.

## Judge postpones Spears' traffic case

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—A judge put the brakes on Britney Spears' driving-without-a-license case Wednesday after her lawyers said they don't believe the troubled pop star is capable of resolving the matter.

Superior Court Judge T.K. Herman continued the misdemeanor case until March 20 after lawyer J. Michael Flanagan said Spears' conservatorship attorneys "do not think she is qualified or capable of entering into a binding agreement" at this time.

The attorneys also don't believe Spears, 26, is capable of giving a deposition or signed declaration, Flanagan said.

Earlier this month, a judge placed Spears under the conservatorship of her father and an attorney after more than a year of increasingly bizarre behavior by the singer.

Spears hit a parked car on Aug. 6, 2007, and left without notifying the owner.

# Linkin Park singer's stalker sentenced

**ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.** (AP)—A woman who stalked Linkin Park lead singer Chester Bennington was sentenced Wednesday to two years in prison for using her work computer at Sandia National Laboratories to track and harass him and his wife.

Devon Townsend has 60 days to surrender to a minimum-security prison in Phoenix, where she is expected to receive mental health care. She had pleaded guilty to stalking and other counts.

Townsend, who worked in Sandia's technology and manufacturing group, used lab computers to illegally access private information about Bennington and his wife, Talinda, in 2006.

According to a plea agreement, Townsend said she obtained family photos, monitored voice messages and traveled to Arizona to meet Bennington, using information she learned about his travel plans. She also obtained correspondence between Warner Bros. Records and Linkin Park's business attorney, including a copy of a check made to Bennington from the record company and a copy of the band's recording contract.

Investigators said Townsend also hacked into the e-mail of Bennington's wife and at one point called the former Playboy model and threatened her.

# Aretha makes PETA's 'worst-dressed' list

NEW YORK (AP)—PETA thinks Aretha Franklin is no queen of soul when it comes to wearing fur. Franklin was crowned this year's worst-dressed celebrity by the animal rights organization. Her crime: wearing "yet another vulgar fur" at the Grammy Awards.

"... you looked as if you were going to perform 'I Am the Walrus' by the Beatles," People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals said Wednesday of Franklin's appearance. "You might be a queen, but you don't know jack about compassion."

"How 'bout some R-E-S-P-E-C-T for animals?" PETA added.

The other offenders are Marilyn Manson, Eva Longoria ("in her trashy furs, she looks like the streetwalker of Wisteria Lane"), Lindsay Lohan, Kate Moss and Kylie Minogue.

PETA called Minogue cold-blooded for toting a python purse. As for Lohan, the group remarked: "'I Know Who Killed Me' isn't just the title of Lindsay Lohan's latest bomb, it's the cry of the animals snuffed out so this 'Mean Girl' can pose in their pelts."

Christina Ricci, Martha Stewart and Alicia Keys have said they've given up wearing fur since being singled out by PETA in previous years.

PETA asked people to vote on the Web site Fur Is Dead.

The group said it took Britney Spears out the running because they didn't want to kick her while she's down.

Aretha Franklin and guest arrive at the Sony BMG Post-Grammy Party in Beverly Hills, Calif. in this Feb. 10, 2008 file photo.

AP

# Pauly Shore countersues Wes Craven

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Pauly Shore is suing neighbor Wes Craven for creating a nightmare on his property in a dispute between the two that began last year.

Shore claimed that a landslide on his Hollywood Hills property in December 2006 was caused by Craven's failure to properly maintain vegetation and landscaping on a hillside on his property, according to a lawsuit filed Monday in Superior Court.

The comedian also alleged that Craven, the director of "A Nightmare on Elm Street" and the "Scream" series, did not eradicate rodents burrowing in the hill and made improvements on his property that "changed the geology, topography and drainage," according to the lawsuit.

A call to Craven's attorney Wednesday was not returned.

Shore's allegations are part of a countersuit in response to a suit filed on behalf of Craven last June.

Craven alleged that Shore upgraded his home with a pool, spa, landscaping and other improvements that caused water to seep down a slope and damage his property.

Both suits seek unspecified damages and a judgment determining who should be held responsible.

## Michael Moore: Bring Fidel to the Oscars

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—"Sicko" director Michael Moore jokes that Fidel Castro would be a "ratings grabber" at Sunday night's Academy Awards show. Moore's Oscar-nominated documentary on the health-care industry concludes with a trip to Cuba, where he seeks care for a group of 9/11 responders who have experienced health problems.

They are greeted with open arms at a Havana hospital and given what appears to be top-notch care that they could not get in the United States.

Castro, who is 81 and in poor health, announced his retirement as president of Cuba this week, ending a half-century of autocratic rule.

"I got some great news today because I was trying to figure out how I was going to get Castro into the Oscars and for me he resigns today so he can come to L.A. and go as my guest and perhaps give the acceptance speech," Moore told AP Television on Tuesday night.

"As long as he keeps it under five hours. I'm telling you, that's got to be a ratings grabber. Can you imagine him? Showing up? If I could talk to (Oscar producer) Gil Cates and maybe get Castro in a dance number at the beginning of the show? Great."

## Vincent D'Onofrio, wife welcome new son

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Vincent D'Onofrio's wife delivered the perfect Valentine Day's gift: a baby boy. Luca D'Onofrio was born Feb. 14 to the "Law & Order: Criminal Intent" star and his wife, Carin, series spokeswoman Pam Golum told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

The boy, who weighed 7 pounds, 15 ounces, and his mother "are doing great," Golum said.

The couple have a 6-year-old son, Elias. D'Onofrio has a teenage daughter from a previous marriage.

## Alley to develop own weight loss brand

AP

Kirstie Alley poses backstage at the Hollywood Film Festival 11th Annual Hollywood Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif. on Monday, Oct. 22, 2007.

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Kirstie Alley and Jenny Craig may have gone their separate ways, but the one-time "Fat Actress" isn't giving up on the weight loss industry.

"After lengthy negotiations, regretfully the Jenny Craig Company and I did not come to an agreement to continue as their spokesperson," Alley said in a statement posted on People Magazine's Web site Tuesday.

Alley, 57, told People that while her experience with Jenny Craig was "extraordinary," she wants "to create something new that will help millions of people end the seemingly never ending fatty-roller coaster ride."

Alley said she intends to develop her own weight-loss brand with plans to launch in 2009.

"We are sorry that she did not accept our offer" to continue appearing in the company's ad campaign, Scott Parker, vice president of marketing for Jenny Craig, told People. "We wish her all the best in her future endeavors."

A message left with Alley's publicist late Tuesday was not immediately returned.

Alley, who starred on Showtime's reality-comedy series "Fat Actress," became a spokeswoman for the Jenny Craig diet program in 2005. About a year later, Alley donned a bikini to show off her new shape on "The Oprah Winfrey Show." At the time, Winfrey said Alley, who is 5-foot-8, had lost 75 pounds, after hitting a high of 220 pounds.

Alley's TV credits also include "Cheers" and "Veronica's Closet."

## Fiancee feels she can't ever measure up to man's late wife

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

**DEAR ABBY**: I have been engaged to a widower I'll call "Grant" for about a year. Grant's wife, "Lilly," has been gone for 15 years. He talks about her frequently, which is OK with me. Lilly was an important part of his life for a long time.

My problem is, I feel I can never quite measure up to her. When we're out in public, he frequently refers to "his late wife," which makes me a bit uncomfortable. Recently he told me in conversation, "Do I wish I had never met you and Lilly was still alive? Absolutely!" It came out of the blue and hit me like a lead balloon.

I understand that Grant wishes his late wife were still alive, but did he have to say, "Do I wish I had never met you?" He is also critical of me and puts me down rather often. When I became upset about his comment, he acted like I was overreacting and overly sensitive.

I feel so hurt. I don't even know if I want to be with Grant anymore. Please give me some advice. My self-esteem is at an all-time low, and I am very depressed.

UNDERVALUED IN PANAMA CITY, FLA.

**DEAR UNDERVALUED: Is it possible that your fiance's comment was in response to something you said to him? (Example: "Grant, you bring up Lilly so often it makes me feel like you wish you had never met me ...")**

**It appears your fiance isn't particularly sensitive to your feelings and isn't likely to change. However, what troubles me more about your letter than the fact that Grant lacks tact and often refers to his late wife—with whom he obviously had a lot of history—is the fact that he puts you down and then blames you for reacting. If this is what you would tolerate in a husband, then you're a glutton for punishment.**

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** We recently invited friends to join us at a special event plus dinner. As plans are coming together, I find that their adult children and spouses have been invited to join us.

Am I wrong in thinking when you invite your friends to a special event, dinner, etc., that it's inconsiderate for them to ask other people to join the party? If I had wanted to spend the evening with their children—or anybody else—I'd have included them, but I didn't. I wanted to spend the evening with the people with whom I initiated the plans.

I'm hoping my letter will be published and those folks will recognize themselves. I still plan to go and will grin and bear it, but it's frustrating. What is your advice?

REALLY ANNOYED, ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.

**DEAR REALLY ANNOYED: Please do not rely too heavily on the people you mentioned reading your letter and recognizing themselves. Dear Abby readers are considerate, and the majority of them abide by the rules of etiquette—at least the majority of the time.**

**What your guests did was extremely presumptuous. Perhaps they don't recognize that their "children" are individuals and not simply extensions of themselves. You are a good sport to go along with their co-opting your evening, but the next time you invite them out, state plainly that you want it to be "just the four of you." No need to be nasty—just clarify.**

---

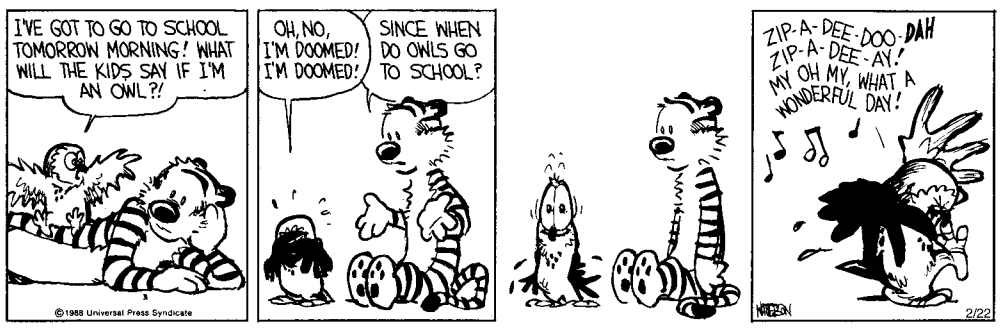
*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

*For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)*

# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


I'VE GOT TO GO TO SCHOOL TOMORROW MORNING! WHAT WILL THE KIDS SAY IF I'M AN OWL?!
OH, NO, I'M DOOMED! I'M DOOMED!
SINCE WHEN DO OWLS GO TO SCHOOL?
ZIP-A-DEE-DOO-DAH ZIP-A-DEE-AY! MY OH MY, WHAT A WONDERFUL DAY!
2/22
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## Garfield®

By Jim Davis

SOME PEOPLE ARE LUCKY
DINNER IS GOING TO BE A LITTLE LATE
AND SOME PEOPLE ARE JON
JIM DAVIS 2-22
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www.garfield.com
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

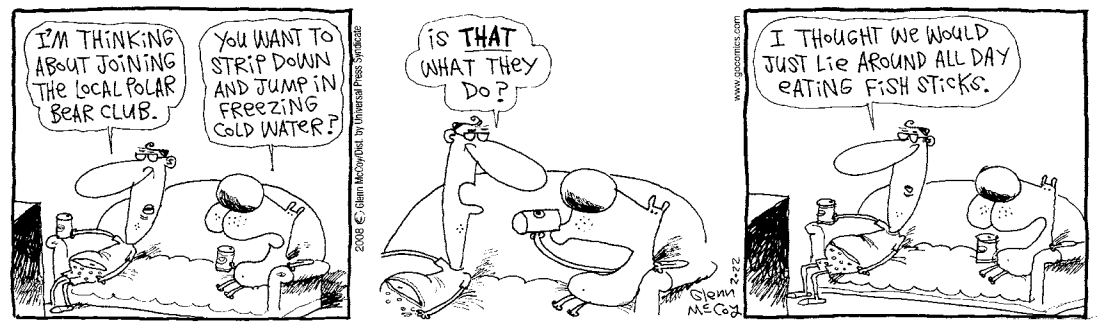
## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

2/22
The don't's of a successful home-based or small business.
Don't take personal phone calls during meetings.
I STILL SAY THE SURVIVORS OF OCEANIC 815 ARE IN SOME FORM OF PURGATORY...
BRIAN BASSETT © 2008 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I'M THINKING ABOUT JOINING THE LOCAL POLAR BEAR CLUB.
YOU WANT TO STRIP DOWN AND JUMP IN FREEZING COLD WATER?
IS THAT WHAT THEY DO?
I THOUGHT WE WOULD JUST LIE AROUND ALL DAY EATING FISH STICKS.
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www.gocomics.com
Glenn McCoy 2-22

## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

**ACROSS**
1 Spigot
4 Boxer's foot ...
7 ... and what it may leave
12 Lemieux milieu
13 Acapulco gold
14 Heart line?
15 Crib
16 "All the Way" lyricist
18 Traveler's stopover
19 Kilmer classic
20 Stats in a big family
22 Pismire
23 Movie
27 Suitable
29 Educational institution
31 Fry lightly
34 Useful
35 Poor substitute
37 That guy
38 Prayer ending
39 Altar affirmative
41 Multi-colored
45 "West Side Story" role
47 Churchill's gesture
48 "Las Vegas" actor
52 Source of valuable matter
53 Flooded
54 Little louse
55 Free (of)
56 Ross or Palmer
57 Exist
58 "Of course"

**DOWN**
1 Leg bone
2 Scoring 100 on
3 Tubular pasta
4 D.C. newspaper
5 Ark's landing site
6 Misogynist's bane
7 Picks up the check
8 Sinbad's bird
9 Playwright Levin
10 Ultimate
11 Hosiery shade
17 Flushing team
21 Mephistopheles
23 Winner
24 Charged bit
25 Affirmative action?
26 Nevada county seat
28 Favorite
30 Greek X
31 Body of water ...
32 ... and an inlet thereof
33 Work with
36 Galvanizing material
37 Empty talk
40 Singer Ross
42 Ebony counterpart?
43 More than coincidental
44 Actions
45 Wan
46 Initial chip
48 Poke
49 Shock and —
50 Welcome sight?
51 Curvy character

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

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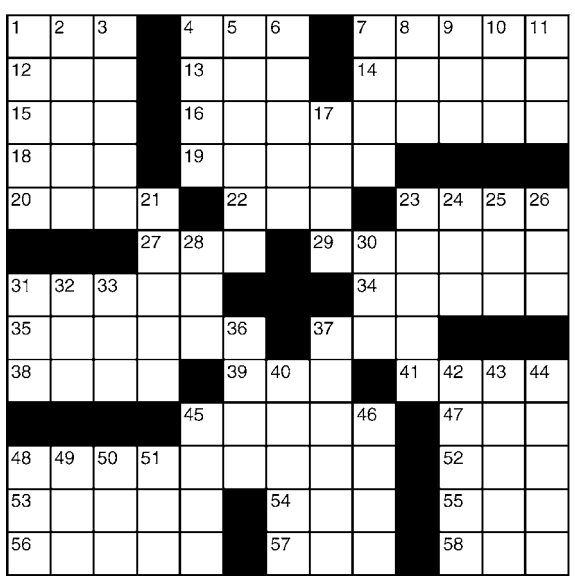
| O | H | M | ■ | M | A | N | E | ■ | I | R | O | N |
| L | E | O | ■ | A | S | E | A | ■ | D | O | L | E |
| D | R | O | P | S | H | O | T | ■ | Y | U | L | E |
| ■ | ■ | N | O | T | ■ | N | U | C | L | E | A | R |
| C | A | S | P | E | R | ■ | P | A | L | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| A | C | H | ■ | R | U | G | ■ | P | I | L | O | T |
| S | M | O | G | ■ | B | I | D | ■ | C | O | P | A |
| T | E | T | R | A | ■ | N | I | P | ■ | N | A | P |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | A | N | A | ■ | G | A | G | G | L | E |
| P | F | E | N | N | I | G | ■ | M | I | S | ■ | ■ |
| A | R | C | O | ■ | S | N | A | P | S | H | O | T |
| D | A | H | L | ■ | L | A | C | E | ■ | O | R | A |
| S | T | O | A | ■ | E | W | E | R | ■ | T | E | X |

Yesterday's answer 2-22



**STUMPED?** For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY**: Miko Hughes, 22; Drew Barrymore, 33; Lea Salonga, 37; Jeri Ryan, 40

**Happy Birthday**: Line up your goals and set priorities so you don't lose sight of your game plan for the year. If your personal life needs some adjustments, make the moves required to clear a passage to peace and contentment. Eliminate anything in your life that has been holding you back or causing you grief. Your numbers are 8, 19, 21, 26, 32, 46

**ARIES** (*March 21-April 19*): Before jumping to conclusions and making inappropriate changes, look at the facts, resolutions and future possibilities. You are sitting in a good position and, if you manipulate matters constructively, you will come out on top. It's staying ahead of the competition that will count. ✪✪✪

**TAURUS** (*April 20-May 20*): Don't get sucked into negative influences when you have so much to offer that will help you engage in positive progress. Focus on work. Avoid connections that are undermining your progress and surround yourself with people who have something to offer. ✪✪✪✪

**GEMINI** (*May 21-June 20*): Don't leave anything to chance. Tie up loose ends, putting as much detail into what you do as possible. You will be judged on your actions not your promises. Emotional issues can be dealt with and settlements agreed upon. ✪✪

**CANCER** (*June 21-July 22*): Take matters into your own hands and you will have the control you desire. An emotional matter can be dealt with and put to rest by the action you take. Do your preparations in secret and surprise everyone with your intentions. ✪✪✪✪

**LEO** (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Your work and getting ahead may not be your focus but it can make a difference to the outcome of a deal you are working on. Love is in the picture, so work it to your advantage and make your play. A change in your finances is apparent. ✪✪✪

**VIRGO** (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You'll be drawn to an opportunity that could lead to a better position. Talk to someone with experience about your plans. A change in your everyday routine will bring about an emotional realization. ✪✪✪

**LIBRA** (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Keep your private affairs to yourself. Social events will lead to romance but be careful not to muddy the waters by getting involved with more than one person. If love comes too easy, question it. ✪✪✪

**SCORPIO** (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't let the people you are closest to run your life or tell you what you can and cannot do. Follow through with your own plans. A change is necessary if you want to expand and develop something you believe in. ✪✪✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Avoid jumping to conclusions or taking action too quickly. Emotional upset appears to be following you around today and could easily end in a dispute. Think before you act. ✪✪

**CAPRICORN** (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Money deals look positive and putting something you want to pursue together will be fun, exciting and prosperous. You've been in need of a change and now is the perfect time to implement your plans. Don't let love interfere. ✪✪✪✪✪

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**AQUARIUS** (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): You may feel obliged to accept changes going on around you but that doesn't necessarily mean you should give in to the demands being made. Make sure you get a fair deal. Look out for yourself this time. ✪✪✪

**PISCES** (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Emotional implications will cause some disruptions in a partnership you are involved in or with concerns at home. Be ready to protect your interests. Be open, honest and fair and you will win. ✪✪✪

**Birthday Baby**: You are creative and emotional. You are passionate and determined to reach your goals. You are aggressive, unpredictable, hard working and dedicated to your beliefs.

*Eugenia's Web sites:* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

## SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 9 | | | | | | 8 |
| | 5 | 2 | | | 1 | | | |
| | | | | | 4 | | 3 | |
| 9 | | | 4 | 2 | | | | |
| 1 | | | | 7 | | | | 6 |
| | | | | 9 | 6 | | | 3 |
| | 9 | | 2 | | | | | |
| | | | 8 | | | 9 | 4 | |
| 3 | | | | | | 5 | | |

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/22

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

**Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 7 |
| 4 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 1 |
| 7 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 5 |
| 2 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 9 |
| 5 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 8 |
| 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| 3 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 2 |
| 8 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| 6 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 4 |

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/21

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## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

**ANTISEPTIC OINTMENTS** **Solution: 7 letters**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | R | E | A | T | M | E | N | T | N | A | E | L | C | L |
| D | H | S | A | R | Y | C | S | C | A | R | E | E | O | E |
| E | H | M | L | R | O | R | U | L | (E) | (B) | (U) | (T) | V | F |
| T | E | R | A | B | E | M | U | T | I | A | I | S | E | A |
| N | N | E | C | R | S | H | A | J | S | O | D | A | R | S |
| E | O | G | I | A | L | W | T | U | N | E | G | P | N | O |
| C | I | N | D | N | E | L | B | O | T | I | N | O | C | L |
| S | T | I | E | D | G | S | I | U | O | L | I | I | P | U |
| U | A | T | M | G | T | T | L | E | A | S | R | D | R | T |
| R | R | A | L | A | N | L | L | N | A | E | U | E | O | I |
| F | A | O | N | E | O | I | R | R | N | G | C | F | D | O |
| A | P | C | V | P | R | E | B | E | I | I | E | E | U | N |
| C | E | E | N | E | T | A | G | B | N | G | K | N | C | R |
| E | R | U | T | X | I | M | W | O | U | N | D | S | T | U |
| P | P | S | E | C | N | A | R | G | A | R | F | E | S | B |

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Abrasions, Agent, Aroma, Blend, Brand, Burn, Care, Clean, Coating, Cover, Curing, Cuts, Defense, External, Fragrance, Gels, Generic, Germs, Injury, Lotion, Medical, Mixture, Oils, Paste, Preparation, Prevention, Products, Rash, Rubbing, Safe, Scented, Skin, Solution, Soother, Sterile, Substance, Surface, Treatment, Tube, Unpolluted, Water, Wounds

**Yesterday's Answer: Coral**

**SALE:** The topics of "Wonderword for Kids" appeal to younger fans but the puzzle-difficulty matches what you've come to expect from Wonderword. For a limited time, the book is on sale for just $4 each (U.S. funds only), payable to Universal Press Syndicate. Include $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to Wonderword, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-6734, ext. 6688. **Sorry,** no online orders for this special offer.

# CLASSIFIED ADS

## FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

---

Apartment for Rent in Aslito. Fully furnished, 24 hrs water. Safe location. Call 256-3864/287-7769

## FOR SALE - COMMERCIAL

Bud's Bar For Sell. $20,000 or best offer. You must see to appreciate. #898-4866/233-1113

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 MAINTENANCE BUILDING REPAIRER (F 13350)
Salary:$3.55-$5.00/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: Pacific Entertainment Corp. dba Club Chicago @234-7900.

7 DANCER (F 13351)
Salary:$3.55-$3.75/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: Pacific Entertainment Corp. dba Club Chicago @234-7900.

1 WAITRESS (F 13352)
Salary:$3.55-$3.75/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: Pacific Entertainment Corp. dba Club Chicago @234-7900.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (F 13353)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; workmens compensation insurance & medical provided. Contact: Samkor Inc. dba Samkor Congregate @322-0072.

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1 MANAGER (F 13354)
Salary:$650.00-$800.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Jee Hyun Corporation dba K2 Travel @483-6322.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (F 13355)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Ju Young Corporation dba O Sun Gift Shop II @483-3934.

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1 MANAGER (F 13356)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Qizhao Zhen dba Kangda Market @288-0234.

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1 DRESSMAKER (F 13357)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Emmy F. Larinay dba D&A Dress Shop @322-6950.

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1 BUILDING MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (F 13358)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employer provided housing with $32.50/monthly charge; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Fuji Pacific Inc. @234-0583.

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1 YARD WORKER (F 13359)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmen's compensation insurance & medical benefit. Contact: Ramon M. San Nicolas dba Bo's Yard & Lawn Service @287-0626.

1 YARD WORKER (F 13360)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation insurance. Contact: Ramon M. San Nicolas dba Bo's Yard & Lawn Service @287-0626.

---

1 SALES CLERK (F 13361)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Shoji Saito dba Pormang Pinoy @235-4424.

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WHATZIT Solution:
It's up to you

---

1 HOUSEWORKER (F 13362)
Salary:$3.55-$4.05/hour. Benefits: $100.00/deductible housing; $100.00/deductible food & medical provided. Contact: Joseph R. Motto @287-3900.

---

1 PLUMBER (F 13363)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation by employer; free transportation to & from the job site; medical insurance 80% by employer and 20% by employee & free housing. Contact: Quad L's Company dba Lifoifoi Building @322-6183.

---

5 SEWING MACHINE OPERATOR (F 13364)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; medical expenses as required by 3CMC S4437/work compensation. Contact: Shao Hong Xia Jones dba Beauty Boutique & Dress Shop @287-8206.

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SMALL ENGINE REPAIR
LAUNDRY REPAIR
- Lawn Mower
- Generator Repair
- Boat Engine
- Bush Cutter Repair
- Motor Bike
- Rewinding

233-5641
Open 7 Day a Week 9:00 AM-9:00 PM

Commercial Space & Room for Rent
- 4000 sq.ft. commercial space, good for warehouse (previously rented to Mingli Wholesale), auto-shop, day-care, office, etc. Located in Chalan Laulau between Middle Rd. & Beach Rd. Back of Triple J Auto.
- Room from $80-$140/mo. behind Triple J Auto on Beach Rd. near to XO Market & H-Mart.

Call Ivan @ 235-0479, 285-9966, 9:00am - 6:00pm

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(6F Nauru Bldg.)
Tel.: 234-3010/235-3010
E-mail: hps@hanmisaipan.com

D' Pirate
SPORT BAR
is looking for attractive
Dancer, Waitress
TWA only
235-3663

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on **Tuesday, February 26, 2008 at 3:00pm on Saipan**. The meeting will be held at the conference room at HCPLB's office located in Bldg. #1336 Ascension Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

**AGENDA**

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (12/10/07)
V. Chairman's Report
VI. Director's Report
VII. Old Business
  A. Proposed Amendments to the HCPLB Regulations for Final Adoption
  B. Review of Draft Regulations for Physicians and Physician Assistants.
VIII. New Business
  A. H.B. 16-25
IX. Applications for Board's Review
  A. New/Renewal Applications
  B. Pending Applications
    1. Dr. Cunningham
X. Miscellaneous Business
XI. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with counsel with pending or anticipated legal matters.
XII. Adjournment of Meeting

/s/ Dr. Norma S. Ada
Chairwoman

LOCAL HIRE
ONE (1) ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Excellent in communication
computer skills and clerical works.
Call 322-9221 for appointment.

WANTED
PART-TIME BOAT CAPTAINS
CALL 322-9221 FOR APPOINTMENT

## MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, The Open Government Act of 1992, the Marianas Public Land Trust have scheduled a Board of Trustees Special Meeting for **Saturday, February 23, 2008 beginning at 9:00 AM at the Plumeria Room, Saipan World Resort; Saipan, MP.**

The following agenda is hereby established:

**I PRELIMINARIES**
- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Adoption of Agenda

**II OLD BUSINESS**
- By-laws Review and Amendment

**III NEW BUSINESS**
- Retention Policy

**IV EXECUTIVE SESSION**
*At anytime during this scheduled meeting, the Board of Trustees may be required to enter into Executive Session to discuss matters deemed privileged and confidential.*

**V MISCELLANEOUS**

**VI ADJOURNMENT**

* It is anticipated that the following matters will be discussed under Executive Session in its entirety.

In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items may be added to the above listing only by the recorded vote of the majority of the trustee governing body.

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written and oral testimony on the above agenda items.

/s/ Alvaro A. Santos
Chairman, Board of Trustees

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Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

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I

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**Find today's solution in this section**

## CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

*Saipan Tribune's* Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

### CLASSIFIED ADS

*Saipan Tribune* also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

| ADS (7DAYS) | COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE) |
|---|---|
| • 3-Liner | $25 |
| • 5-Liner | $35 |
| • 3-Liner with picture | $45 |
| • 5-Liner with picture | $55 |

### JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

All job vacancy announcements will be published for two issues in each of two successive weeks.

| | |
|---|---|
| **1st position** | **$13.00** |
| **2nd position** | **$5.00** |
| **Succeeding positions** | **$2.00** |

These rates apply to all job vacancy announcements in Saipan that include corresponding benefits and which positions are all under the same company name and dba.

Newspaper clippings are also available for $.25 per copy.

### ADVERTISING DEADLINE

**Classified Ads**

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

**Job Vacancy Announcements**

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.

### CANCELLATION

**Classified Ads**

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

**Job Vacancy Announcements**

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

### REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

### CHECK YOUR ADS

*Saipan Tribune* will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

### ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 MAINTENANCE (GROUND) (F 13365)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provided food; medical & workmen's compensation insurance provided. Contact: Samkor Inc. dba Samkor Congregate @322-0072.

---

2 WAITER/WAITRESS (F 13366)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self housing; self food; medical provided & workers compensation. Contact: S&D Corporation dba Monte Carlo @235-9147.

---

1 HOUSEWORKER (F 13367)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing at a charge $77.92/monthly; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Mayumi Nakadai @233-7737.

---

1 HOUSEWORKER (F 13368)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing; $100.00/food & medical. Contact: Trinidad S. Diaz @236-9805/287-9675.

---

1 PLUMBER (F 13369)
Salary:$3.55-$4.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: L&T International Corp. @322-1690.

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1 COMPUTER PROGRAMMER (F 13370)
Salary:$3.55-$5.50/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: L&T International Corp. @322-1690.

---

3 SECURITY OFFICER (F 13371)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation. Contact: Aurelia G. Long dba Paradise Security Services @433-2274.

---

1 MASON (F 13372)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Housing free & self provided food. Contact: David M./Daria Cing dba Cing's Enterprises.

---

1 ASSISTANT MANAGER (F 13373)
Salary:$700.00-$3,700.00/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: HIS Saipan, Inc. @234-7053.

1 ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER (F 13374)
Salary:$700.00-$2,530.00/monthly. Benefits: $10.00-$50.00/gas allowance; $50.00-$350.00/monthly housing; workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: HIS Saipan, Inc. @234-7053.

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2 WAITRESS/WAITER (F 13375)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: Jonny's Corporation @233-9019.

---

1 (SCUBA DIVING) INSTRUCTOR SPORTS (F 13376)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical expenses & workers compensation employer provided. Contact: Open Knowledge System Inc. @322-6963.

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1 AUTO-MECHANIC (F 13377)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: PCC Corporation @235-3048/233-5281.

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1 MATERIAL COORDINATOR (F 13378)
Salary:$3.55-$4.50/hour. Benefits: Medical & workman compensation provided. Contact: Guangdong Dev. Co., Ltd. @288-2288.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (WF 0001)
Salary:$4:00-$4.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: Saipan International School dba SIS @ 288-9660.

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**2 COUNTER SUPERVISOR (FSUN 0001)**
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing deductible; $100.00/food deductible; workmen's compensation & health company provided. Contact: D'Elegance Ent., Inc. dba D'Elegance Rest. @234-9227.

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**1 MANAGER, RESERVATIONS (FSUN 0002)**
Salary:$1,972.00-$2,200.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. dba Fiesta Resort & SPA Saipan @234-6412.

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**1 SALES MANAGER (FSUN 0003)**
Salary:$1,972.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); sick leave (earned after 90 days of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

**1 GUESTS RELATIONS SUPERVISOR (FSUN 0004)**
Salary:$3.55-$5.37/hour. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

**1 PLUMBER (FSUN 0005)**
Salary:$3.55-$5.00/hour. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; personal leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

**1 FOOD & BEVERAGE MANAGER (FSUN 0006)**
Salary:$1,972.00-$2,500.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); sick leave (earned after 90 days of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

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**1 MANAGER (FSUN 0007)**
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: ER provide housing; self provide food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: EEA Corporation @288-6192.

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**1 DRESS MAKER (FSUN 0008)**
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provide food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: BJF Enterprises Inc. @323-8181.

---

**1 HOUSEWORKER (FSUN 0009)**
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Norma M. Agana @234-9721.

---

**1 CARE GIVER (FSUN 0010)**
Salary:$400.00/semi-monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: John & Shirley A. Wilson @288-1816.

---

**1 HOUSEWORKER (FSUN 0011)**
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Danilo E. Asiatico @288-4426.

**1 COOK (FSUN 0012)**
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Danilo E. Asiatico dba MJ BBQ & Retail @288-1681.

---

**1 GEN. MANAGER (FSUN 0013)**
Salary:$4.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Global Ocean Divers Inc. @233-8157.

**2 DIVING INSTRUCTOR (FSUN 0014)**
Salary:$4.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Global Ocean Divers Inc. @233-8157.

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**1 MANAGER (FSUN 0015)**
Salary:$5.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Thai Massage Inc. dba Massage Service @233-2441.

**4 MASSEUSE/MASSEUR (FSUN 0016)**
Salary:$5.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Thai Massage Incorporated dba Thai Massage @233-2441.

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**1 WEDDING CONSULTANT, SUPERVISOR (FSUN 0017)**
Salary:$3.55-$10.90/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; $200.00/monthly allowance & $30.00/monthly allowance transportation; medical & workers compensation insurance provided by employer. Contact: Watabe Saipan, Inc. dba Watabe Wedding @235-9332.

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**1 ELECTRICIAN (FSUN 0018)**
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: KP Company Ltd. @322-0007.

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## NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

# BOARD VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The board of directors for the Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities (Council) wishes to announce two board vacancies. Applicants can be from Tinian, Rota and Saipan.

The Council's board comprises thirteen volunteer members who serve three year terms and can be renewed once only. The Council strives to maintain a board that reflects a broad cross section of our community. The ideal candidates will have a strong desire to promote the Council's mission, programs, and activities. Council members are expected to engage in creative development of programs; encourage regrant applicants and recipients on their programs; and be active in the Council activities as well as the administrative requirements. Council members are unlike the usual board membership in that they are often called upon to participate in programs; develop programs; and promote programs of the Council.

The Council is a non-profit private corporation affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The Council's mission is to foster awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Humanities through support of educational programs that relate the humanities to the indigenous cultures and to the intellectual needs and interests of the people of the Commonwealth.

Board responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Attending regular Council meetings four times annually.
- Attending periodic committee meetings.
- Evaluating Council programs and activities.
- Reviewing grant applications.
- Raising funds.
- Providing input from the community.
- Attending conferences, workshops and other meetings relating to the humanities.
- Willing to spend from 2-4 hours per month on Council activities, particularly as Chair of a committee.

Interested residents are invited to submit their letters of interest and resumes to **Herman T. Guerrero, Chair, Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities, P.O. Box 506437 Saipan, MP 96950 or fax them to the Council at 235-4786**. Letters and resumes must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on **March 26, 2008**. For additional information please contact the Council's Executive Director at telephone 235-4785 or visit the Council's website at http://nmi.humanities.org.

## COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

# JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, THAT THE PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL SYSTEM SHALL BE APPLIED AND ADMINISTERED ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AS DEFINED BY THE NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC LAW 6 - 10, REGARDLESS OF AGE, RACE, SEX, RELIGION, POLITICAL AFFILIATION OR BELIEF, MARITAL STATUS, DISABILITY OR PLACE OF ORIGIN. APPLICANTS FOR THIS POSITION MUST BE A U.S. CITIZEN OR IS ELIGIBLE AND AUTHORIZED TO WORK IN THE U.S., INCLUDING THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.

| Announcement # | Position/Title | Pay Level /Step | Per Annum | Minimum Requirements | Closing Date | Location |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PSS-020-2007 | **EDUCATION SPECIALIST HV (HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH & NUTRITION SERVICE COORDINATOR) (AMENDMENT/ RE-ANNOUNCEMENT III)** (Non-Certified Application) | 31,32,33,34 / 01-10 | $23,706.21-$42,558.00 | **Education Specialist I -** Applicants with Bachelors degree in Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, or related field plus at least two (2) years experience preferred, OR Associates Degree with four (4) years related work experience. **Education Specialist II -** Applicants with Bachelors degree in Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, or related field with 15 graduate semester hours (GSH) plus at least four (4) years experience preferred, OR Bachelors Degree with six (6) years related work experience. **Education Specialist III -** Applicants with Masters Degree in Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, or related field plus five (5) years work-related experience, OR Bachelors degree in Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, or related field with 15 graduate semester hours (GSH) plus at least seven (7) years experience preferred. **Education Specialist IV -** Applicants with Masters Degree in Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, or related field plus six (6) years work-related experience, OR Bachelors degree in Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, or related field with 15 graduate semester hours (GSH) plus at least eight (8) years experience preferred. | Until Filled | Headstart Program |
| PSS-058-2007 | **PROGRAM MANAGER** (Non-Certified Application) | 31,32,33,34 / 01-10 | $23,706.21-$42,558.00 | Bachelors Degree in Early Childhood Education, Education, Social Sciences, Human Development, Counseling or related field, plus four (4) years work-related experience. OR Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education, Education, Social Sciences, Human Development, Counseling or related field. Plus two (2) years work-related experience. | Until Filled | Headstart Program |
| PSS-062-2007 | **LEGAL COUNSEL** (Non-Certified Application) | UNGRADED | $40,000.00-$60,000.00 | Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Juris Doctorate degree. Applicant must be a member in good standing of the CNMI bar or a member of a state bar and qualify to practice law in the CNMI. The applicant must also have at least four (4) years legal work experience, preferably for government entities handling litigation and/or education issues and have strong writing and speaking skills. Good client relation skills and ability to work independently and productively as part of a team are essential. | March 4, 2008 | Board of Education |
| PSS-2008-014 | **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER III (OFFICE MANAGER)** (Non-Certified Application) | 31/01-12 | $23,706.21-$40,531.43 | Graduation from a U.S. accredited college or university with a BA degree, plus six (6) years work related experience OR High School Graduate, plus ten (10) years work related experience. | February 29, 2008 | Board of Education |

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY OBTAIN A DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION WITH QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION FORMS AT THE PSS HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE AT THE 3rd RETIREMENT BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FORMS: (1) COPY OF DIPLOMA/DEGREE, (2) TRANSCRIPTS, (3) POLICE CLEARANCE (FROM PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR PAST SIX0 MONTHS), (4) VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER, (5) RESUME, AND (6) TEACHING CERTIFICATE (IF APPLICABLE).COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE OR MAILED TO: CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, RETIREMENT BUILDING; THIRD FLOOR, P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950, and TEL. #. (670) 237-3064, FAX # (670) 664-3707. ALSO VISIT http://**www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources** ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB.

# AMENDED INVITATION FOR BIDS
## WATER TASK FORCE
## IFB08-GOV-042

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the CNMI Water Task Force, are soliciting sealed bids for the CAPITOL HILL 1.0 MILLION GALLON RESERVOIR REHABILITATION PROJECT in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A bid guarantee of 15 percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security may be in certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company licensed to do business in theCNMI.

The Contractor will be required to submit payment and performance bonds from a U.S. Treasury listed company. The Contractor will also be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal laws including the Davis Bacon Act.

The project consists, in general, but is not limited to:

1. General cleaning of the interior of the tank, including removal of all accumulated sediments on the floor of the tank. Sediments to be disposed of at an acceptable location such as the Marpi Sanitary Landfill.
2. General cleaning of the tank exterior, including the removal of all plant growth on the roof, water blasting of the tank exterior and removal of all debris.
3. Mobilization for the interior and exterior painting including the demolition and removal of existing appurtenances and accessories, and the installation of new accessories as specified in Section 10200, including interior and exterior ladders, drying of the interior of the tank, patching cracks and crevices, and sand blasting where required for a smooth surface. The tank floor may require patching or a topping of concrete.
4. Painting the interior and exterior surfaces. The specifications Section 09810 for the exterior coating and Section 09800 for the interior coating storage pond, specify a particular painting product and paint system, but the specifications allow the contractor to bid an "or equal", paint system. The paint system bid must be an integrated system whereby the manufacturer certifies and warranties the product for a minimum of five years. The painting system shall be compatible with the surface preparation products and be acceptable by the US EPA for use in a potable water reservoir.
5. Periodic inspections, verification of paint thicknesses and leak testing as well as the final clean-up shall be considered a part of the total contract performance. All records shall be turned over to the Project Engineer upon completion and acceptance of the work.

A non-refundable payment of $150 is required for each set of Plans, Specifications, and Proposal Forms, available on or after **February 20, 2008** at the Water Task Force Office, Capitol Hill, Saipan. A mandatory pre-bid conference for this project is scheduled at 10:00 a.m., on **February 25, 2008**, at the WTF Conference Room, Saipan. A project site visit is included as a part of the pre-bid meeting.

All inquiries shall be in writing and address to Pedro Sasamoto, Program Manager, Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 or fax to (670) 664-2279, no later than. **February 25, 2008**.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001, except Article 7, "Local Business Preference", amended by Public Laws 15-95 and Public Law 15-118, is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal lawgranting the funds for this project.

Sealed bids shall be identified on outside of the envelope by Invitation for Bids No. IFB08-GOV-042. An original and four copies of the bid must be submitted to the Procurement and Supply Office, Lower Base, Saipan before 3:00 pm, on, **March 3, 2008**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for the receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 3:00 pm local time, M**arch 3, 2008**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via email to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders outside the CNMI, an original and four copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service, the official government postal service of a foreign country, or a commercial courier, no later than **March 3, 2008**, and must be received no later than **March 12, 2008**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 3:00 pm, local time March 13, 2008. However, if no Notices of Intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 3:00 pm, local time on March 4, 2008.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires recipients of HUD funds and contractors to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these HUD funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible".

All bidders are hereby notified that the CNMI Government will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this solicitation, women and small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, and disability status.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ Timothy P. Villagomez
Lieutenant Governor/Contracting Officer

/s/ Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement and Supply

# Commonwealth I Sankattan Siha Na Islas Mariana
## Ofisinan I Gubietno
## Dipåttamenton I Tano' Pupbliku

### NOTISIAN PRINIPONEN ATKILON TÅNO' PUBLIKU

Segun i Lai Publiku 15-2, I Dipåttamenton Tano' Publiku man-nånå'i' notisia pot i intension para ma'atkilan tano' publiku giya Saipan, Commonwealth Sankatan siha na Islas Marianas. Maseha håye na petsona interesao, siña muna halom opinion, infotmasion, yan kinentra pot i mapropone na atkilon tano publiku. I mapropopone i sigiente siha.

i. Para uma`atkila tano' publiku madeskribe kumo i numiron propiadåt 003 A 11, konsisiste kuårentai-nuebe mit kuåttro sientos sinkuentai-nuebe metro (49,459) square meters, 003 A 20, ha konsisiste kuårentai-nuebe mit, kinientos tres (49,503) square meters, 003 A 19, ha konsisiste dies mit(10,000) square meters, mas o` menos ni gaige giya Marpi, Saipan. Kopian i lugåt i sitiu gaige gi Depåttamenton Tano' Publiku ni libre hao umina.

ii. I para u inatkila este na tano i Win DnC. Co., LTD, un koporasion gi CNMI. I kuetpon direktot siha i sigente: Young Jae Kim, Kwon Hee Lee, yan si Kwi Dong Woo.

I presidente yan treserun i koporasion si Young Jae Kim. I segundo presidente si Kwon Hee Lee; sekritåria si Kwi Dong Woo.

iii. Si Señor Young Jae Kim (Presidente yan Treseru), Kwon Hee Lee (segundon i Presidente) yan si Kwi Dong Woo (Sekritårio), munigosiu i kontratan atkilon.

iv. I para u inatkila i lugåt debi de u usa solamente para u håtsa ya u establesi un hotel yan ottro siha fasilidåt.

I mapropone na tiempon kontråtan atkilon para bente-siñko åños (25 yrs.), yan appottunidat ma-ekstiende para talo kinse åños (15 yrs.).

I mapropone na åpas atkilon gi sakkan durånten i tiempo sigun i mapega na presiu segun i balin i lugåt.

v. I kabåles na kopian i mapropone na kontråtan atkilon siña un chule gi ofisinan I Dipåttamenton Tano' Publiku, ni gaige gi mina dos na bibienda gi Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, giya Saipan, mina dos bibienda gi Bank of Saipan Commercial Building giya Luta, fine'nina na bibienda gi Kings Commercial Building giya Tinian.

vi. Taya otro propositu guaha pot kontråtan atkilon tano publiko ni tineteka iya Marpi, Saipan.

vii. I Sekretarion Dipåttamenton Tano' Publiku siempre hu aksepta tinige' opinion, mensåhen kinentra yan testimonio osino otro siha na propositu ginen i man-interesao na petsona åntes de Matsu 6, 2008 gi Ofisinan Dipåttamenton Tano' Publiku siha ni gaige giya Saipan, Tinian yan Luta.

### ARONGORONG REEL POMWOL AKKILONUL FALÚWEER TOULAP

Sángi Tálil 106 (b) mellól Alléghúl Toulap ye 15-2, Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap ekke atotoowow ammataf igha ebwe akkilaaló eghús falúw mellól Seipél, Commonwealth Téél Falúwasch Marianas. Schóókka eyoor máfiyeer rebwe isisilong ischil mángámangiir, aweewe, aingiingil reel pomwol akkilonul ammwelil falúweer toulap. Me bwal Alléghúl Toulap ye 15-2, e ayoora, lamal aweewe kka rebwe mweiti ngali milikka ebwe akkatéélló.

i. Pomwol akkilonul falúweer toulap ekke bwáári Lot No. 003 A 11, eyoor faigh me tiwow sangaras fabwughuw limeigh me tiwow llapal (49,459 square meters), elap me ngáre eghús, Lot No. 003 A 19, faigh me tiwoow sangaras, lima bwughuw elluw (49,503) sq. meters llapal, elap me ngare eghuus, me Lot No. 003 A 20,, seigh sangaras (10,000) sq. meters, llapal, elap me eghus, elo Máschepi, Seipél. Tilighial bwuley yeel nge eyoor llól Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap (Public Lands) ngare óubwe ghuley fischiy.

ii. Schéschéél schóól akkilon nge Win DnC Co., LTD., corporation. Schóól Assamwoolul mwiisch (board of directors) mellol corporation nge Young Jae Kim, Kwon Hee Lee me Kwidong Woo.

Samwoolul (President me Treasurer) corporation nge Young Jae Kim. Vice President nge Kwon Hee Lee. Sekkretório nge Kwidong Woo.

iii. Schóól aweweel akkilon nge Young Jae Kim (Samwoolul me Treasurer), Kwon Hee Lee (Vice President) me Kwidong Woo (Sekkretório) corporation yeel.

iv. Schóól akkilon ebwe yááyá bwuley ngali schagh akkayul hotel me akkaw iimw kka a fillong.

Tool aighúghúl pomwol akkilon ebwe ruweigh me limwoow ráágh (25 years), emmwel rebwe sóbweey ngáli bwal seigh me limwoow ráágh (15 years).

Pomwol akkilon ebwe mwir sángi llapal méél falúw (value of the property).

v. Emmwel óubwe bwughil tilighial akkilon mellól bwulasiyool ammwelil falúweer toulap, elo aruwowal pwó(2nd floor) me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building llól Dandan, Seipél; aruwowal pwó (2nd floor) mellól Bank of Saipan Commercial Buiding, Luuta; me ngáre mmwal pwó (1st floor) mellól Kings Commercial Building, Tchúlúyól.

vi. Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge esáál bweibwogh mwo akkááw pomwol akkilon yeel me Máschepi, Seipél.

vii. Samwoolul Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap ebwe bwughil aweewe kkaal, aingiingil, mereer ammweyút aramas mmwal schagh Ghúúw(Móózo) 6, 2007 mellól Depattamentool Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap iye elo Seipél, Luuta me Tchúlúyól..

### NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public lands in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot No. 003 A 11, containing an area of approximately 49,459 square meters, more or less, Lot No. 003 A 19, containing an area of approximately 49,503 square meters, more or less, and Lot No. 003 A 20, containing an area of approximately 10,000 square meters, situated in Marpi, Saipan. A copy of the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.

ii. The prospective lessee is Win DnC Co., LTD., a CNMI corporation. The board of directors of the corporation are Young Jae Kim, Kwon Hee Lee, and Kwidong Woo.

The president and treasurer of the corporation is Young Jae Kim. The vice president is Kwon Hee Lee. The secretary is Kwidong Woo.

iii. The proposed lease was negotiated by Mr. Young Jae Kim, Mr. Kwon Hee Lee, and Mr. Kwidong Woo, president/treasurer, vice president, and secretary, respectively, of the corporation.

iv. The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of constructing and developing a hotel and related facilities.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years, with an option to extend the lease for an additional 15 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property.

v. A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; the 2nd floor of the Bank of Saipan Commercial Building, Rota; or the 1st floor of the Kings Commercial Building, Tinian.

vi. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Lower Base, Saipan.

vii. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before March 6, 2008 at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**
**State Board of Education**
## Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

# Invitation For Bid
# IFB 08-016

The CNMI Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, and installation of **Desktop Computers, Laptops, and Accessories for the following schools and program:**

1. **Head Start**
2. **Marianas High School**
3. **William S. Reyes Elementary School**

Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be placed in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-016" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than March 3, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in separate envelope marked "IFB 08-016, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility determination" (1-original and 1-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp.** Questions shall be submitted no later than ten (10) calendar days prior to the submission deadline.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

General inquiries to this announcement may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3062 / 3035.

**/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.**
**Commissioner of Education**

**/S/ Carl F. de la Cruz, M.B.A.**
**Acting P & S Officer**

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**
**State Board of Education**
## Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

# Invitation For Bid
# IFB 08-022

The Public School System (PSS) and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the P**urchase and Delivery of One (1) Pick-Up Truck for Hopwood Junior High School.**

Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-022" containing (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than March 3, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-022, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (1-original and 1-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions must be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**. Technical questions, in order to ensure consideration, should be submitted no later than ten (10) business days prior to the deadline for submission of bids.

General inquiries may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3068 / 3035.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

**/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.**
**Commissioner of Education**

**/S/ Carl F. de la Cruz, M.B.A.**
**Acting P & S Officer**

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**
**State Board of Education**
## Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

# Invitation For Bid
# IFB 08-024

The Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the renovation of the following PSS Head Start Centers:

1. **Tanapag Head Start**
2. **W.S. Reyes Head Start (BLDG. B)**

Detailed information on the scope of work and specifications are available, for a fee, at Pacific Quick Print & Post located in Middle Road, Garapan, Saipan. **All interested bidders, prior to obtaining copies of the detailed information, shall register with the PSS Office of Procurement & Supply.**

The PSS Office of Procurement & Supply is located on the 3rd Floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capital Hill Area, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-024" containing (1) original and five (5) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than March 18, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope mark-ed "IFB 08-024, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (1-original and one copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at the PSS Conference Room, 3rd Floor NMI Retirement Fund Building, on February 28, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. Site visits, to be scheduled, are mandatory. Scheduled dates and times are subject to change.

General inquiries shall be directed to Mr. Juan Babauta at telephone number 237-3062. Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl Dela Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**.

Contractors are required to submit with their bid, a copy of their valid CNMI Business License.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

**/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.**
**Commissioner of Education**

**/S/ Carl Dela Cruz, M.B.A.**
**Acting P & S Officer**

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# Kobe helps Lakers top Suns, Shaq, 130-124

**PHOENIX** (AP)—Kobe Bryant scored 41 points to help the Los Angeles Lakers spoil Shaquille O'Neal's Phoenix debut with a 130-124 victory over the Suns on Wednesday night.

Pau Gasol added 29, including a breakaway dunk that put Los Angeles up 123-117 with 1:15 to play. Lamar Odom added 22 for the Lakers, who won their sixth in a row to move into a tie with Phoenix atop the Pacific Division.

O'Neal scored nine of his 15 points in the final quarter and grabbed nine rebounds in 29 minutes against his old team in his first game in nearly a month. He came to the Suns a week ago in an unexpected trade that sent Shawn Marion and Marcus Banks to Miami. O'Neal played for the Lakers from 1996-2004.

Amare Stoudemire had 37 points and 15 rebounds for Phoenix, while Steve Nash added 26 points and eight assists and Leandro Barbosa had 17 points.

O'Neal's debut came against the team he led to three NBA titles, and the visitors were in control most of the way.

Los Angeles, which routed Atlanta on Tuesday night at home, led by as many as 13 in the first half and was up 65-57 at the break.

Phoenix finally caught up when O'Neal forced a turnover, then scored on a short hook inside to make it 87-87 with 2:31 left in the period. Gasol's hook shot at the buzzer gave Los Angeles a 95-91 lead entering the fourth.

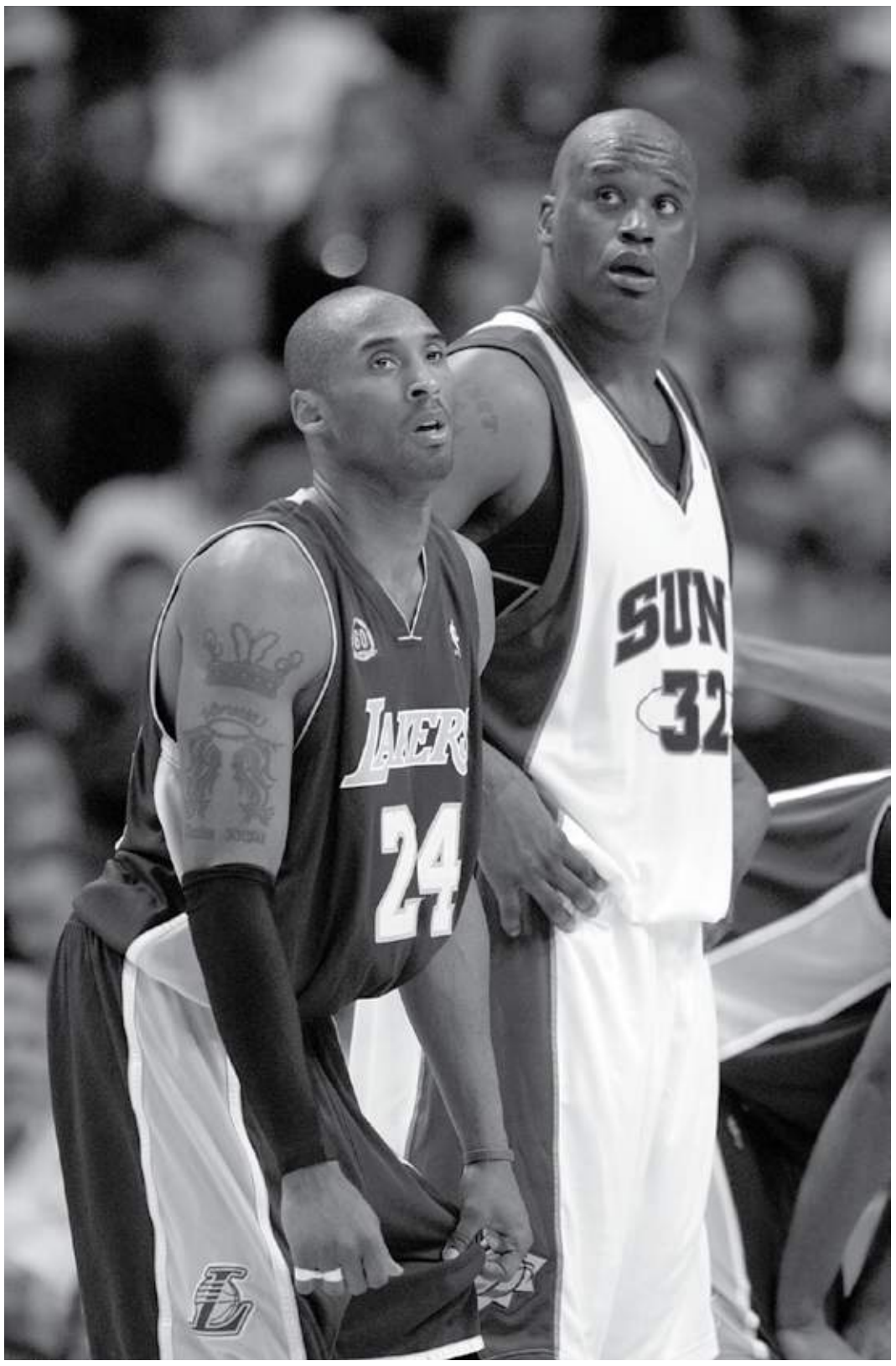
After Bryant's layup made it 105-97, rookie D.J. Strawberry twice passed to Barbosa for breakaway layups, then drew an offensive foul against Bryant. Stoudemire followed with a three-point play and Phoenix led for the first time since the early minutes 107-106 with 7:26 remaining.

The Lakers came back, though, and Gasol's three-point play with 5:43 left capped a 9-2 spurt to put Los Angeles ahead 115-108 5:43 from the end. But O'Neal scored the next six points, the last two on a goaltending call against Bryant, to cut it to 115-114. O'Neal sprinted to the defensive end of the floor after the two points.

Bryant scored inside to put Los Angeles up 117-114 with 4:04 to play. Moments later, O'Neal slammed teammate Raja Bell in the head with an elbow, forcing the Suns guard out of the game. O'Neal made one of two free throws to cut the lead to 117-115 with 3:40 to go.

Bryant's 19-footer made it to 119-115 with 2:50 to go, but Nash's two free throws, on Derrick Fisher's fifth foul, cut the lead to 119-117 with 1:49 remaining.

Odom got free for a layup, Gasol got his breakaway, and it was over.



AP

Phoenix Suns' Shaquille O'Neal, right, and Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant stand next to one another in the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2008, in Phoenix.

### Hornets 104, Mavericks 93

At New Orleans, Chris Paul racked up 31 points, 11 assists and a career-high nine steals, spoiling Kidd's debut with Dallas and lifting the New Orleans Hornets to victory over the Mavericks.

Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas with 31 points. Reserve Jason Terry scored 14 points and Erick Dampier added 11.

### Raptors 127 Magic 110

At Toronto, Chris Bosh had 40 points - going 14-for-16 from the field and 11-for-11 from the foul line—and Jose Calderon had 19 points and 13 assists for the Raptors.

### Cavaliers 106 Pacers 97

At Indianapolis, LeBron James had his second consecutive triple-double with 31 points, 14 rebounds and 12 assists as Cleveland beat the Pacers.

### 76ers 124 Knicks 84

At Philadelphia, the 76ers scored 100 points through three quarters en route to crushing New York.

### Bucks 103 Pistons 98

At Milwuakee, Michael Redd scored 27 points and Andrew Bogut continued his tear with 14 points and 14 rebounds as the Bucks beat Detroit and snapped a four-game losing streak.

### Nets 110 Bulls 102 (OT)

At East Rutherford, N.J., Marcus Williams, in his first game as Jason Kidd's temporary replacement at point guard, combined with Richard Jefferson for New Jersey's first 10 points of overtime in a win over Chicago.

### Warriors 119 Celtics 117

At Oakland, Calif., Baron Davis hit a 20-foot jumper with 0.3 seconds to play, and Golden State sent NBA-leading Boston to its second straight loss since Kevin Garnett's return.

### Clippers 100 Grizzlies 86

At Los Angeles, Corey Maggette had 30 points and 10 rebounds and the Clippers sent the Memphis to its 11th straight road loss.

### Kings 119 Hawks 107

At Sacramento, Calif., Ron Artest scored 29 points and Kevin Martin had 26 for the Kings, who spoiled the homecoming of ex-teammate Mike Bibby.

# Spurs acquire Kurt Thomas from Sonics

**SAN ANTONIO** (AP)—The San Antonio Spurs acquired veteran forward Kurt Thomas from the Seattle SuperSonics on Wednesday night for guard Brent Barry, center Francisco Elson and a 2009 first-round draft pick.

The 6-foot-9 Thomas, in his 13th NBA season, gives the defending NBA champions much-needed size to complement Tim Duncan. In 42 games with the SuperSonics, the former Texas Christian star averaged 7.5 points and 8.8 rebounds.

"We need things that they don't and they need things that may not fit here right now," Spurs general manager R.C. Buford said. "Hopefully the addition of Kurt will strengthen our playoff push."

The SuperSonics acquired the 35-year-old Thomas from Phoenix in July. Thomas, taken by Miami in the first round of the 1995 draft, also has played for Dallas and New York.

"I think the landscape of the West has put a premium on interior defense," Buford said. "Now with the trades of recent days, that's only improved."

Shaquille O'Neal was recently traded to the Phoenix Suns, and Memphis traded 7-footer Pau Gasol to the Los Angeles Lakers.

Sonics general manager Sam Presti moved forward with the trade mostly for the draft pick. Seattle has 13 draft picks over the next three years, including six in the first round - two each season.

"Looking at the first-round pick, in combination with our other future picks, we have great flexibility to add to our core or acquire another impact player in the future," Presti said. "At the same time, Kurt is a tremendous person and player, and I appreciate his contributions this season and wish him success."

Along with the first-rounder, Seattle gets the expiring contracts of Barry and Elson, which combined with trade exception money left over from trades involving Ray Allen and Rashard Lewis, should give the Sonics flexibility under the salary cap.

Presti would not say whether there are any other deals pending before Thursday's trade deadline.

"We have a responsibility to listen if something comes across our desk that we feel like can make us better now or in the future," he said.

Buford said Thomas, assigned to guard Duncan during last season's Spurs-Suns playoff series, will not be with the team for its game against Minnesota on Thursday night.

The SuperSonics are 14-38 and have struggled this season despite the addition of No. 2 overall draft pick Kevin Durant. The Spurs are 35-17.

Barry, who signed with the Spurs as a free agent in July 2004, averaged 7.3 points in 29 games for San Antonio this season. The 13-year veteran has been sidelined the last few weeks by a calf injury.

Spurs coach Gregg Popovich was asked about a timeline for Barry's return before a game on Tuesday—a day before the trade was announced—and said it would probably be two to three weeks.

"He was playing really well early in the year and now there's been a 20, 25-game period where we've missed him throughout," Buford said of Barry.

Elson averaged 3.5 points and 3.3 rebounds in 41 games with the Spurs this season, his second in San Antonio.

# Suns, Nuggets to play first outdoor game in modern NBA history

**INDIAN WELLS, California** (AP)—The Phoenix Suns and Denver Nuggets will play the first outdoor game in modern NBA history during the 2008-09 preseason.

The exhibition game on Oct. 11 will be at the 16,000-seat Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

The game follows the NHL's successful outdoor game on New Year's Day in Buffalo, New York.

"What will happen here will be historic," Rick Welts, the Suns' president and chief operating officer, said on Tuesday. "More importantly, I think this will be a lot of fun. Most of us learned how to play basketball outdoors. This had the perfect circumstances to do it in the NBA."

It won't be the first NBA game to be played outdoors. The Suns defeated the Milwaukee Bucks in a preseason game on Sept. 24, 1972, at a baseball stadium in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Welts said the ideal weather in October and the facility made it possible to hold the event. The tennis stadium is home to the Pacific Life Open, one of the major events on the men's and women's pro tours.

Because the seating is built around the parameters of a tennis court, rather than a hockey rink like most NBA arenas, Welts said the game will offer a more intimate setting.

In the unlikely event the game is rained out, Welts said it would be played the next day.

The Suns feature megastars Steve Nash, Amare Stoudemire and Shaquille O'Neal. The team picked the Denver Nuggets because of their marquee players, Allen Iverson and Carmelo Anthony, and because there are direct flights from Denver to Palm Springs.

# Tiger overcomes Holmes in Match Play

**MARANA, Ariz.** (AP)—Tiger Woods produced another incredible comeback in the desert Wednesday, playing the final five holes in 5-under par to turn what looked like certain defeat into an unlikely victory in the Accenture Match Play Championship.

Woods fell behind J.B. Holmes on the first hole when his tee shot sailed into the desert and out of play, and he was three holes down with five to play after taking another penalty shot from the desert.

But he turned it around quickly, winning the next four holes, capped by a 35-foot eagle putt on the 17th. He escaped with a 1-up victory on the 18th when Holmes missed an 8-foot birdie putt.

"I just kept telling myself, even when I was 3 down, there's still a chance to win in regulation," Woods said. "I was just going to have to start playing a hell of a lot better. Then all of a sudden, putts started falling in from everywhere."

It started with a 15-foot birdie on the 14th, followed by a meaningless 18-foot birdie on the 15th, when he only needed two putts to win the hole. The first overhand fist pump came at the 16th when he made a third straight birdie from just over 20 feet to square it for the first time since they shook hands on the tee to start the match.

The loudest roar came on the par-5 17th, which Woods reached in two with a 5-wood from the rough. He holed his long eagle putt for his first lead of the match, then held on to avoid what would have been a shocking departure.

Holmes, whose big drives kept pressure on Woods the entire match, was helpless at the end.

"I got beat," Holmes said. "Playing the best player in the world, 3 up with five to play, I just said, 'Don't do anything stupid. Make him beat you.' And he did."

Woods shot 30 on the back nine in his first tournament since he shot 31 on the back nine of the Dubai Desert Classic to overcome a four-shot deficit and win his fourth straight official tournament.

"For some reason, momentum just goes your way," Woods said. "Sometimes the run is early in the round, sometimes middle or late. It just so happened that in the last two rounds, it was late. But at least it happened today. At least I had a run. I wasn't playing good enough to win the match unless I had a run."

None of the top four seeds had an easy time at Dove Mountain.

Ernie Els, the No. 4 seed who changed his mind last week and decided to enter a tournament that has been so vexing, shot 40 on his opening nine and was soundly beaten, 6 and 5, by Jonathan Byrd. It was fourth straight time Els has lost in the first round.

Second-seeded Phil Mickelson, the winner Sunday at Riviera, held off Pat Perez 1 up. Third-seeded Steve Stricker needed 20 holes to beat Daniel Chopra, a small measure of revenge. Chopra beat him in a four-hole playoff at the Mercedes-Benz Championship last month.

Four of the top eight seeds were gone after the first day of the Match Play, one of the most chaotic days in golf. Jim Furyk (No. 6) continued to struggle with his game, losing to Colin Montgomerie, 3 and 2; Justin Rose (7) fell to Rod Pampling, 2 and 1; and Rory Sabbatini, who played college golf at Arizona, lost to Bradley Dredge, 4 and 3.

"You can never really fancy your chances in this format," Lee Westwood said after making eight birdies in a 3-and-2 victory over Brandt Snedeker. "This is the kind of week where you unpack, but you don't move stuff too far away from your suitcase."

Woods appeared to have his bags packed.

He had said on Tuesday that when players fall behind two or three holes, they generally lose. That looked certain when Holmes took a 3-up lead through five holes, and he staved off one charge with a birdie on the ninth to stay 2 holes ahead.

Woods had to take an unplayable lie in the desert on the 13th, swatting the bag with his driver after taking his drop.

Then came a charge that sent cheers resounding across the desert fauna, starting with his birdie on the 14th. Holmes three-putted from the back of the 15th to hand Woods' the next hole, and appeared to have the advantage on the 16th when Woods right foot slipped on his downswing, and his shot spun back 20 feet below the hole.

"It was just one of those things where everything kind of turned my way," Woods said. "Very, very fortunate to advance."

Next up is Arron Oberholser, who is playing with an injured shoulder. He made his '08 debut by beating Mike Weir, 3 and 1.

The Woods-Holmes match was among only eight that went the distance, the fewest number since 2002.

The blowouts came from Woody Austin, who birdied his first four holes against Toru Taniguchi; Niclas Fasth, who holed a bunker shot for eagle on No. 1 and buried Richard Green of Australia; and Byrd making Els wish he had taken that holiday in South Africa.

All won by a 6-and-5 margin.

"You just don't know what to expect in match play," Fasth said. "It's like flipping a coin. It really doesn't matter who you play, except that nobody wants to play Tiger in the first round."

For the longest time, Woods looked like a pushover.

AP

Tiger Woods hits from the fifth tee during the first round of the Accenture Match Play Championship tournament at The Gallery Golf Club at Dove Mountain, Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2008, in Marana, Ariz.

# A-Rod says expects drug questions

**TAMPA, Fla.** (AP)—Alex Rodriguez sat in the first-base dugout at Legends Field, surrounded by the usual circle of cameras, microphones and reporters. He knows the scrutiny will only increase as he approaches Barry Bonds' career home-run record, especially in an era when all top athletes must prove they haven't juiced up on performance-enhancing drugs.

In his first session with reporters during spring training, Rodriguez talked about baseball's drug-testing program and made a curious statement.

"Last year, I got tested 9-to-10 times," Rodriguez said. "We have a very, very strict policy, and I think the game is making tremendous strides."

If Rodriguez had been tested that many times, either he was selected for an unusually high number of random checks or he might have been subjected to additional tests—which would happen, for instance, if a player tests positive for a banned stimulant for the first time.

Later in the day, A-Rod said it was just hyperbole.

"My quote from earlier today was taken literally. I was not tested nine or 10 times last year. I was just using exaggeration to make a point," Rodriguez said in a statement through Yankees spokesman Jason Zillo.

"My intent was simply to shed light on the fact that the current program being implemented is working, and a reason for that is through frequent testing. I apologize for any confusion I may have caused."

Rodriguez stated categorically that he had never taken steroids or human growth hormone. He said he isn't worried about Jose Canseco, who has hinted without going into detail that he will make allegations of some sort against Rodriguez in an upcoming book.

"Right now, the game is in a very not-trusting situation with our public, with our fans," A-Rod said. "Some of the things that I've accomplished and potentially some of the things that people think I can accomplish, my name has come up and will probably come up again in the future."

Rodriguez also denied a claim last week by former Texas teammate John Rocker that doctors from management and the players' association told A-Rod, Rafael Palmeiro, Ivan Rodriguez and Rocker following a spring training meeting how to effectively use steroids. Rodriguez and Rocker were with the Rangers in 2002.

"That did not happen," A-Rod said.

Rodriguez signed a record $275 million, 10-year contract to remain with the New York Yankees. Just 32, he is an 11-time All-Star who led the with 54 home runs and 156 RBIs last season and won his third AL MVP award. Heading into this year, he's 17th on the career list with 518 home runs, 244 behind the record Bonds established last year.

He wouldn't talk about why he opted out of his record $252 million, 10-year contract last October only to return a few weeks later.

"It was just a big misunderstanding," Yankees senior vice president Hank Steinbrenner said. "We really didn't know that he wanted to come back and he was very concerned, very alarmed when he found out we didn't know he wanted to come back and he made it clear he did, and everything was great from there."

Wherever A-Rod goes, there are questions. He is 8-for-59 (.136) in the postseason dating to 2004 and hitless in 18 consecutive playoff at-bats with runners in scoring position.

No matter how many home runs he hits, without a World Series ring he can't take a place alongside Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and Joe DiMaggio, can't be mentioned with Mickey Mantle, Yogi Berra and Reggie Jackson.

"I think there's a sense of urgency," new manager Joe Girardi said. "There's no better year than the present, right?"

Playing for the Yankees has largely robbed A-Rod of his privacy. Whether he's sunbathing in Central Park or walking through a Toronto hotel lobby with a blond stripper, paparazzi are usually hiding nearby.

"When you're as good as Alex, you're going to be scrutinized more, and people are always watching," Girardi said. "When you're a great player, people never take their eyes off of you, so everything that you do is under a microscope, and he's doing it at the highest level in New York."

Across town, the Mets have their own icon to show off this year. Two-time Cy Young Award winner Johan Santana is the Queens ace to play opposite A-Rod's Bronx bravura.

"I'm glad for a guy like Santana, gets to play in a city like New York," Rodriguez said. "He's the best pitcher. He deserves to be in the city, and in a forum. I thought it was a fantastic move by the New York Mets."

Rodriguez also praised teammate Andy Pettitte, who was forced to give a deposition and affidavit to Congress in which he admitted using HGH in 2002 and 2004. Pettitte also said Roger Clemens discussed HGH use nearly a decade ago—Clemens said Pettitte "misremembers."

"Andy is one of the greatest human beings I've ever met," Rodriguez said. "I have two daughters—well, I have one and one on the way. If I had a daughter, I would want 'em to marry Andy Pettitte. The age difference might be a little awkward, but in today's day and age anything is possible."

# Hurricanes upset No. 5 Duke, 96-95

**CORAL GABLES, Fla.** (AP)—Looking to bounce back from their first conference loss, the Duke Blue Devils instead stumbled again. The Miami Hurricanes beat fifth-ranked Duke for the first time in 45 years Wednesday, scoring 15 consecutive points to build a big lead early in the second half and holding on to win 96-95.

Ranked No. 2 just last week, the Blue Devils (22-3 overall, 10-2 Atlantic Coast Conference) lost for the second time in four days.

Miami (18-7, 5-6) beat Duke for the first time since the first game in the series Dec. 21, 1962. The Blue Devils had won all 10 games since.

Miami made six of eight free throws in the final 41 seconds to preserve the upset. Duke's DeMarcus Nelson sank a layup with 2 seconds left to make the score 94-92, but Miami's Jack McClinton sank two clinching free throws before Nelson hit a meaningless 3-pointer at the buzzer.

Senior Dwayne Collins scored a career-high 26 points and McClinton added 22 to help the Hurricanes win their third ACC game in a row. They beat a top-five team for the first time since a victory at No. 2 Connecticut on Feb. 20, 1999.

Sophomore Jon Scheyer scored a career-high 27 points for the Blue Devils, who nearly rallied from a 20-point second-half deficit.

AP

Miami's Lance Hurdle (1) prepares to shoot to the basket as Duke's David McClure, right, defends in the first half of a basketball game in Coral Gables, Fla., Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2008.

The Blue Devils had a season-high turnover total for the second game in a row, losing the ball 23 times. They struggled shooting from the perimeter against Miami's zone, and when Duke tried to force the ball inside, the Hurricanes often tipped it away and repeatedly showed more hustle chasing loose balls.

Miami's Jimmy Graham leaped out of bounds to make one save, hitting a teammate with a pass that bounced between a Duke player's legs.

The Blue Devils also gave up a season-high point total for the second successive game. They missed seven shots and committed four turnovers during the drought, which left them trailing 59-39.

Duke struggled from the start against Miami's zone, failing to score on eight consecutive possessions. The Blue Devils committed eight turnovers in the first 8 minutes, missed seven shots in a row and fell behind 17-11.

Duke twice tied the score later in the half, but the Hurricanes scored on their last four possessions, and Collins' reverse layup in the final seconds put them up 41-36 at halftime.

Collins sank a similar shot to start the second half, drew a foul and made the free throw for an eight-point lead. After Kyle Singler sank a 3-pointer for Duke, the Hurricanes made their 15-point run capped by McClinton's 3-pointer.

Miami maintained a double-digit lead until Scheyer made a 3-pointer to make the score 82-75 with 3:20 left.

# Goodell hopes to speak to Walsh soon

**INDIANAPOLIS** (AP)—NFL commissioner Roger Goodell hopes the NFL is close to an agreement that will allow former New England Patriots employee Matt Walsh to tell the league about the tapes he is said to have made of the St. Louis Rams' walkthrough before the 2002 Super Bowl.

"The lawyers are still talking and we're anxious to speak to him. We're anxious to get an agreement to get him to come forth." Goodell told the Associated Press on Wednesday before the start of the NFL combine.

"We hope to be able to talk to him shortly."

Walsh, now a golf pro in Maui, did video work for the Patriots when they won the first of their three Super Bowls after the 2001 season. Three weeks ago, the Boston Herald reported that Walsh claimed he had taped the practice before the Patriots' 20-17 upset of the Rams, who were two-touchdown favorites.

NFL lawyers have been meeting with Michael Levy, Walsh's Washington-based lawyer, who is seeking further protection for his client if he tells what he knows.

Levy said last week that the NFL's offer of protection "is highly conditional and still leaves Mr. Walsh vulnerable. I have asked the NFL to provide Mr. Walsh with the necessary legal protections so that he can come forward with the truth without fear of retaliation and litigation."

Goodell has said that Walsh was not interviewed as part of the NFL's investigation into "Spygate," which involved the NFL confiscating tapes from a Patriots employee who recorded the New York Jets' defensive signals from the sideline during the opening game of the 2007 season.

As a result of that investigation, New England coach Bill Belichick was fined $500,000 and the team was fined $250,000 and forfeited its 2008 first-round draft choice.

Six confiscated tapes and other documents pertaining to the Patriots' taping were subsequently destroyed by the league. Goodell has defended the destruction of the tapes.

Last week, Willie Gary, who played seven games for the Rams that season, filed suit in New Orleans accusing the Patriots of fraud, unfair trade practices and engaging in a "pattern of racketeering." Three fans joined in the suit.

# BANMI to form coaches association

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands president Elias Rangamar has suggested to the BANMI board the need to create a separate association for all coaches in the CNMI.

BANMI already has a separate association in women's basketball and referees.

Rangamar brought up the idea during the last meeting of the BANMI board on Feb. 9 2008, where he would be tasked to contact all certified coaches on the island to organize themselves into an association.

BANMI secretary general Michael A. White has agreed to draft the bylaws and other documents that are needed for the creation of the coaches association.

CNMI national team coach Rufino Aguon, who is the BANMI/FIBA Level I instructor along with Rangamar, is suggesting that no one should be allowed in BANMI-organized leagues or tournaments unless they became members of the coaches association.

Rangamar said the coaches association would include all active and inactive coaches in the CNMI. He said there are about 30 coaches in different levels in the CNMI.

Among the 30, only four are FIBA Level II coaches. They are Aguon, Rangamar, former Division of Sports and Recreation director Tony Rogolifoi, and Saipan Stevedore Suns coach Sonny Flores. The rest of the coaches are either Level I or no level at all.

Once the association is formed, they will form among themselves a panel of coaches that will come up with the criteria for the selection of coaches and the coaching staff in the different age divisions of the national team.

"For example if you are selected to coach the national junior team you will come up with your own two-year plan complete with your aims for the team, and a detailed strength and conditioning program," Rangamar said.

He added the system of selection would be both used for the men's and women's divisions. "Part of the job is to come up with the style and system that everybody can use."

Rangamar said he and Aguon would also be conducting coaches clinics, workshops, and tours in the future.

The formed panel among the coaches will also select individuals that they will be sending or would attend off-island coaching clinics and development seminars especially at the FIBA Oceania main office in New South Wales, Australia.

"We would help them [coaches association] develop a code of conduct for all coaches. We are also hoping in two years time all coaches in BANMI-organized leagues or tournaments to be certified," said Rangamar.

Rangamar said BANMI would collect membership fees to all who wanted to be part of the coaches association with the money to be used to buy materials and other equipment they would use in conducting clinics.

He said membership to the coaches association is open to all. "We are inviting parents, teachers, and all of those who have the passion for basketball to join the coaches association.

"The association is not only open to coaches and if you don't want to be a coach you can be an official or one of the committee members. You must be certified in order for you to be a coach, he said."

## MARCEAU

From Page 44

2007 Tagaman champion Julie Dibens' withdrawal from the region's longest running multisport race, citing injuries.

The 35-year-old Marceau has an impressive race resume. He was the International Triathlon Union World Champion in 2000, and finished third place in the "World's" in 2003. He is also a two-time Olympian and in 2006 finished runner-up in the Nissan XTERRA World Championship. He was born in Jan. 30, 1973, and made his XTERRA debut in 2002.

The withdrawal of Marceau and Dibens now leaves Renata Bucher of Switzerland and Andrew Noble of Australia as the only returning champions from last year's Saipan Sportsfest. Noble won last year's 18th Tagaman Triathlon.

The XTERRA Saipan Championship and the 19th Tagaman Triathlon will be held in back-to-back weekends next month.

The 1.5-kilometer swim, 30-km bike, and 12-km run XTERRA Saipan Championship will be held on March 8. It will treat world class triathletes to a swim in the clear warm waters of the Philippine Sea, a bike on coral roads and single-track, and a run through jungle and caves while passing World War II relics. The race starts and ends at Micro Beach.

The 2-km swim, 60-kim bike, and 15-km run Tagaman, meanwhile, begins at Pacific Islands Club and traverses the entire 15-mile length of the island of Saipan. Aside from the XTERRA Saipan Championship and Tagaman Triathlon, the 2008 Saipan Sportfest will also feature the annual Sophia Walk, an XTERRA bike race, and Taga Kids.

Marceau and Bucher continued their dominance by winning the 6th XTERRA Saipan Championships last March 17.

## AUSTRALIA

From Page 44

especially for his current SSC team whose swimmers are short on experience.

"This trip was a learning experience for all of our swimmers, as they are still in the infancy of what international swimming is truly all about. They came home with flying colors this time," he said.

Stewart then went on to dissect Lester Lapuz's, Abigail Martinsen's, Michael Moran Jr's, Blair Nicholls', and Junior Pamaran's performances in Australia.

Lapuz, said Stewart, had the most LTB swims of any with nine of 10 best swims, said Stewart.

"His distance freestyle has continued to improve as well as his breaststroke events. However, it's his individual medley improvement that stands out the most to me. All four of his competitive strokes are coming together, making him a well-rounded swimmer in less than two years," he added.

Lapuz slashed 0.68 off his 100m freestyle to 1:90.79, his 200m freestyle by 2.75 to 2:33.82, his 400m freestyle by 2.84 to 5:26.73, his 100m backstroke by 34.06 to 1:26.67, his 50m breaststroke by 0.24 to 44.02, his 100m breaststroke by 3.54 to 1:32.63, his 200m breaststroke by 20.34 to 3:16.73, his 100m butterfly by 14.86 to 1:27.68, and his 200m IM by 3.95 to 2:57.26.

Stewart also had good words to say about Martinsen, another of SSC's young 10-year-olds, now swimming for almost a year.

"She has shown the most improvement of any of our girls. Just turning 10 like Victoria [Chentsova] in the past two weeks, with a little more experience, I believe Abby to be one of the best female swimmers to come around in a long time," he said.

Martinsen improved her times in the 200m freestyle to 3:11.54 (LTB by 1.04), 50m backstroke to 51.68 (LTB by 0.77), 100m backstroke to 1:57.05 (LTB by 3.62), 50m breaststroke to 57.76 (LTB by 0.83), 100m breaststroke to 2:04.04 (LTB by 5.36), and 100m butterfly to 2:00.87 (LTB).

Moran, meanwhile, Stewart said follows the learning curve of Lapuz.

"Michael is almost the twin swimmer to Lester when it comes to the level of improvement. Michael tends to favor the shorter distance events, however as he is gaining training strength, he will challenge Lester in all aspects of swimming. His best swim was the team's largest time drop (34.53 seconds) in the 200m breaststroke."

Moran dropped 33 seconds off his 100m freesyle to 1:07.80, his 200m freesytle by 1.18 to 2:32.45, his 400m freestyle by 5.3 to 5:32.04, his 100m backstroke by 23.36 to 1:32.72, his 50m breaststroke by 0.35 to 41.60, his 100m breaststroke by 1.26 to 1:30.3, his 200m breaststroke by 34.53 to 3:23.71, his 200m IM by 8.62 to 3:04.68, and his 100m freestyle relay split to 1:06.30.

Stewart said Nicholls probably had the best meet of his swimming career in Australua, dropping seven of nine LTBs.

"Most impressive were his drops in the 400m freestyle (17 seconds), and a 5.5-second drop in the 200m freestyle."

The other seven events Nichols swam in were as follows—50m freestyle in 27.65 (LTB by 0.39), 100m freestyle in 1:02.88 (LTBby 0.40), 100m backstroke in 1:19.34 (LTB by 1.74), 50m butterfly in 33.49 (LTB by 0.57), 200m IM in 2:50.35 (LTB by 7.28), and 100m freestyle relay split in 1:01.48 (LTB).

Stewart had some good comments about Pamaran as well.

"Junior, our oldest swimmer, showed great improvements in the backstroke events, with a great 15-second drop in the 50m backstroke. I really liked the way he stepped up on our 400m freestyle relay as well and had a split of 1:06, which was more than a second faster than he swam minutes earlier in his individual 100," he said.

Pamaran tackled the 100m freestyle in 1:07.50 (LTB by 0.46), 50m backstroke in 41.92 (LTB by 15.26), 100m backstroke in 1:36.68 (LTB by 10.65), and 100m freestyle relay split by 1:06.27 (LTB).

The Far North Queensland Swimming Championships was held from Feb. 16 to 17, 2008.

## MARIANAS CUP

From Page 44

The clinic will give local beach volleyball players the chance to learn from the some of the best professional spikers. For more information about the clinic, call Russ Quinn at 287-1676.

Cramer said he is also looking for some individuals who would volunteer their time to help assist the pros in the clinic.

The pro exhibition matches will be played tonight starting at 6pm with U.S. pros Jenn Snyder and Janelle Koester going up against the Korean pair of Jeeyeun Han and Ji Youn June.

The men's exhibition match will follow shortly with Phil Dalhausser returning after skipping last year's tournament. He will again team up with Paul Baxter when they battle Shinya Hata and new partner Yoshiumi Hasegawa.

The tournament begins tomorrow starting with pool play. There are 25 teams listed in the men's division while 16 signed up for the women's.

Pool play will be a single-elimination round where the top teams in each pool will advance to the double-elimination phase of the tournament on Sunday. The finals of both divisions will be played on Sunday.

Dalhausser, who was the 2007 AVP most valuable player, is a three-time AVP best offensive player from 2005 to 2007 and was also named most improved player by AVP and the FIVB in 2006.

He also won the 2007 AVP Crocs Cup Champion with teammate Todd Rogers and they also won the 2007 AVP team of the year and he was also a two-time FIVB best blocker in 2006 and 2007 and was the 2007 FIVB best hitter.

More than 90 players from Hawaii, California, Japan, Guam, Korea, Italy, Russia, and the CNMI have already participated in the Marianas Cup in the last three years.

The event is approved by the FIVB and USA Volleyball and is listed in the FIVB website as a country-against-country tournament.

Japan's Shigekazu Fujimatsu and Daisuke Matsumoto won last year's edition beating Saki Naivana and J.R. Rosetti in the finals.

## HOMERS

From Page 44

### Law & Order 10, Parks & Recreation 1

Emery Fitial and Eric Sasamoto also homered for their team as Law & Order cruised to a 10-1 win over Parks & Recreation.

Fitial went 3-for-4 to go with his two singles, one run, and three RBIs while Sasamoto went 2-for-3 with two runs, a triple, and an RBI.

Vince Marigmen pitched in no relief giving up one unearned run on eight hits with four strikeouts and one walk.

Felix Rabauliman, who singled, scored Parks & Rec's lone run when he reached home plate on a throwing error.

### Procurement & Supply 18, Mayor's Office 2

P&S was all business against the Mayor's Office as they used a 14-run third inning scoring spree to cruise to an 18-2 win over their opponents.

Jack Reyes pitched for three scoreless innings limiting Mayor's Office to three hits while striking out one batter and walking another.

Jess Mesa pitched one inning in relief coming in in the bottom of the fourth inning and allowing Fred Reyes and Melvin Iglecias score runs for Mayor's Office before preserving the win by retiring the next three batters.

### PSS 7, Water Boys 0

Public School System won by default against Water Boys after their opponents showed up with only eight players.

Softball action resumes today at the Tan Ge field with Customs-Almost facing Labor-DOLI at 6pm, while Commonwealth Health Center clashes with Aguaguat at 8pm after the 7pm women's match. The final game will be between Division of Agriculture and Department of Public Lands-Red Sox at 9pm.

## TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

### NBA STANDINGS

**EASTERN CONFERENCE**

**Atlantic Division**

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boston | 41 | 11 | .788 | _ |
| Toronto | 29 | 23 | .558 | 12 |
| New Jersey | 24 | 30 | .444 | 18 |
| Philadelphia | 24 | 31 | .436 | 18 1/2 |
| New York | 16 | 38 | .296 | 26 |

**Southeast Division**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Orlando | 34 | 22 | .607 | _ |
| Washington | 25 | 28 | .472 | 7 1/2 |
| Atlanta | 21 | 30 | .412 | 10 1/2 |
| Charlotte | 19 | 35 | .352 | 14 |
| Miami | 9 | 42 | .176 | 22 1/2 |

**Central Division**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Detroit | 39 | 15 | .722 | _ |
| Cleveland | 30 | 24 | .556 | 9 |
| Chicago | 21 | 32 | .396 | 17 1/2 |
| Indiana | 21 | 33 | .389 | 18 |
| Milwaukee | 20 | 34 | .370 | 19 |

**WESTERN CONFERENCE**

**Southwest Division**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| New Orleans | 37 | 15 | .712 | _ |
| San Antonio | 35 | 17 | .673 | 2 |
| Dallas | 35 | 19 | .648 | 3 |
| Houston | 33 | 20 | .623 | 4 1/2 |
| Memphis | 14 | 40 | .259 | 24 |

**Northwest Division**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Utah | 35 | 19 | .648 | _ |
| Denver | 33 | 20 | .623 | 1 1/2 |
| Portland | 28 | 25 | .528 | 6 1/2 |
| Seattle | 14 | 8 | .269 | 20 |
| Minnesota | 11 | 41 | .212 | 23 |

**Pacific Division**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| L.A. Lakers | 37 | 17 | .685 | _ |
| Phoenix | 37 | 17 | .685 | _ |
| Golden State | 33 | 21 | .611 | 4 |
| Sacramento | 25 | 28 | .472 | 11 1/2 |
| L.A. Clippers | 18 | 33 | .353 | 17 1/2 |

**Yesterday's Games**

Toronto 127, Orlando 110
Cleveland 106, Indiana 97
Philadelphia 124, New York 84
New Jersey 110, Chicago 102, OT
Milwaukee 103, Detroit 98
New Orleans 104, Dallas 93
L.A. Lakers 130, Phoenix 124
Sacramento 119, Atlanta 107
Golden State 119, Boston 117
L.A. Clippers 100, Memphis 86

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### LOCAL SCORES

**Govt Softball Standings**

**Men's Division**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| DCCA | 12 | 0 |
| Aguaguat | 10 | 0 |
| CHC | 10 | 3 |
| PSS | 9 | 2 |
| Law & Order | 8 | 5 |
| Labor | 7 | 1 |
| Legislature | 7 | 4 |
| CUC | 7 | 5 |
| Ports Police | 7 | 5 |
| P&S | 7 | 7 |
| DPS | 5 | 4 |
| ARFF | 4 | 8 |
| WTF Drillers | 3 | 8 |
| Water Boys | 4 | 9 |
| Customs Almost | 2 | 7 |
| Parks & Rec | 2 | 11 |
| DPL Red Sox | 1 | 8 |
| DOA | 1 | 10 |
| Mayors | 1 | 12 |

**Women's Division**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CUC | 6 | 1 |
| PSS | 6 | 1 |
| DCCA | 3 | 4 |
| Finance | 1 | 7 |
| CHC-DPH | 0 | 3 |

# 8 start '08 with Coconut Classic win

Participants of the 2008 Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament pose for a group photo.

Some of the participants in the different age divisions of the Coconut Classic enjoy a light moment after three days of competition.

**Photos and Text By JON PEREZ**
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REPORTER

Eight local netters began their 2008 campaign on a winning note, after topping the Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament held over the weekend at the tennis courts of American Memorial Park and Pacific Islands Club.

Leading the list of winners is CNMI top junior netter Ji Hoon Heo, who rallied back from three games down to score a 9-7 decision over former mentor Jeff Race.

Heo defeated Son, 8-5, to claim a spot in the finals, while Race cruised to an 8-1 victory over Tomo Imazato in the other semis match to clinch the second finals berth.

Other age division winners were Fernando Cajigan (men's Over-40); Mayuko Arriola (women's singles); Benjie Decena (boys' 18-and-under); Rafael Jones (boys' 13-and-under); Theecel Minor (girls' 13-and-under); Chris Cajigan (boys' 9-and-under); and first-timer Tammy Ackerman (girls' 9-and-under).

Fernando Cajigan defeated Michael Jang, 8-6, while Arriola outlasted Mailman, 9-7, in the women's singles with Thea Minor finishing in third place.

Thea's sister, Theecel, ruled the girls' 13-and-under division after an 8-2 crushing of Ilia Correla. Theecel trounced Neghar Rastguiy, 8-1, to arrange a finals showdown with Correla, who was an 8-3 winner over Amy Arenovski.

Benjie Decena defeated Russell Buenaventura to clinch the boys' 18-and-under title, 9-7. Decena edged Dominic von Siebenthal, 8-6, while Buenaventura beat James Camacho, 8-3, in the semifinals.

Chris Cajigan scored a 6-1 win over Colin Ramsey for the boys' 9-and-under title, while Ackerman ruled the girls' 9-and-under division after a 6-4 decision against Gabi Race.

Imazato bounced back to rule the mixed up doubles when he paired up with Chris Cajigan in beating the tandem of Son and Gabi Race, 8-6.

Over 100 players joined the Coconut Classic, which is the first tournament of the year organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association. A total of 46 pairs, or 92 players, also took part in the mixed up doubles.

Ji Hoon Heo watches the direction of his forehand return in his men's open semifinal match against Nicolas Son in the 2008 Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament last weekend at American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Nicolas Son keeps his eye on the ball as he prepares to make a backhand return.

Top, Ilia Corella prepares to make a double-handed backhand return in her finals match against Theecel Minor in the girls' 13-and-under division.



Theecel Minor keeps her eye on the ball as she prepares to make a double-handed backhand return in her finals match against Ilia Corella in the girls' 13-and-under division.



James Camacho makes a forehand return in his semifinal match against Russell Buenaventura in the boys' 18-and-under division.

Top, Tinian's Benjie Decena is a picture of concentration as he makes a forehand return.

Right, Russell Buenaventura watches the ball sail out of bounds in his 18-and-under finals match against Benjie Decena.

Jeff Race prepares to serve in his men's open finals match against Ji Hoon Heo.

**8 start '08 with Coconut Classic win**

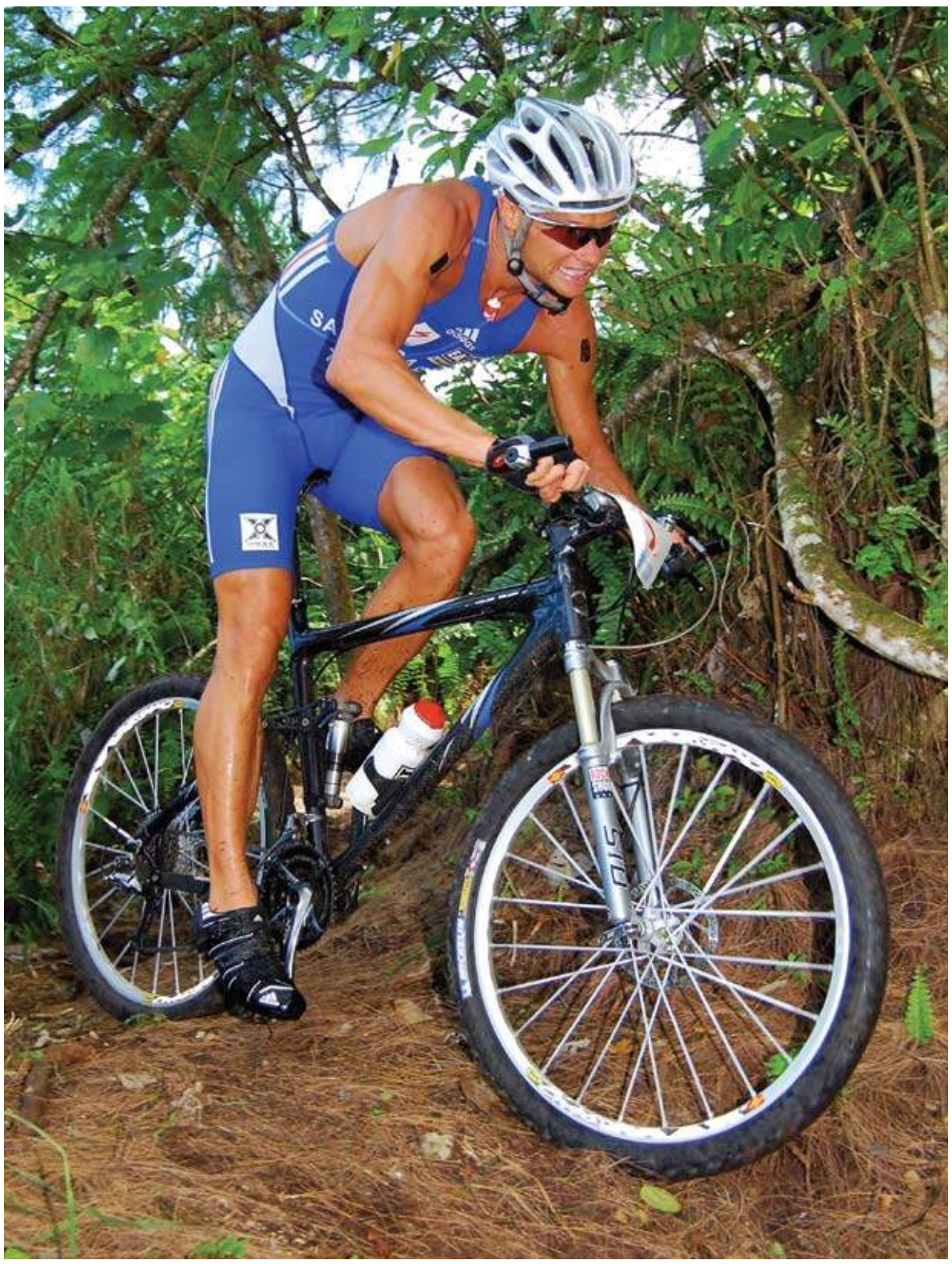
Eight local netters began their 2008 campaign on a winning note after topping the Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament held over the weekend at the tennis courts of American Memorial Park and Pacific Islands Club. 43



**Kobe helps Lakers top Suns, Shaq, 130-124**

Kobe Bryant scored 41 points to help the Los Angeles Lakers spoil Shaquille O'Neal's Phoenix debut with a 130-124 victory over the Suns on Wednesday night. 39

# Marceau will not defend title



©RICH CRUSE/XTERRA

Four-time XTERRA Saipan Championship winner Olivier Marceau of Switzerland tackles the bike portion of last year's race in this file photo.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Four-time XTERRA Saipan Championship winner Olivier Marceau of Switzerland will not compete in the 2008 edition of the race due to a conflict in his schedule, according to local organizer Taga Inc.

Taga Inc. president Wolf Mojica said Marceau has informed the organizing committee that he will not take part in this year's Saipan Sportsfest because he will compete in a 2008 Beijing Olympic Games triathlon qualifying event in Australia, which is set two weeks after the March 8 XTERRA event on Saipan.

Marceau has been a staple in what is dubbed as "The Crown Jewel" of the XTERRA Tour. He has not only won the race the past four years, but dominated the competition and capped his exploits last year by finishing the 1.5-kilometer swim, 30-km bike, and 12-km run course in two hours, 27 minutes, and 16 seconds.

Marceau's decision to skip this year's XTERRA Saipan comes in the heels of

*See AUSTRALIA on Page 42*

# Homers lead WTF, Law & Order to victory

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Home runs highlighted consecutive victories by Water Task Force and Law & Order as action continued in the Inter-Government Men's Softball League last Wednesday at the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Field.

Mike Blas and Larry Tenorio homered as Water Task Force scored a 14-10 win over Airport Rescue Fire Fighters, while Emery Fitial and Eric Sasamoto belted consecutive round-trippers in Law & Order's 10-1 crushing of Parks & Recreation.

Blas had two home runs in the game going 2-for-3, while scoring two runs and had five RBIs and Tenorio went 3-for-4 with a two-run inside-the-park shot in the first inning.

Tenorio went 3-for-4 scoring two runs with a double and four RBIs. Pitcher Ike Borja went 3-for-4, all singles, with one run and one RBI.

*See HOMERS on Page 42*

# 'Australia trip was learning experience for swimmers'

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Abigail Martinsen, Junior Pamaran, Lester Lapuz, Blair Nicholls, Michael Moran Jr., Cooper Graf, Victoria Chentsova, and Sarah Johnson pose after the parade to start the Far North Queensland Long Course Swimming Championships in Cairns, Australia.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

***Second of two-part series***

The Far North Queensland Long Course Swimming Championships in Cairns, Australia may have netted the Saipan Swim Club 12 medals, but for its head coach Michael Stewart the competition was not all about bringing home the shiny hardware.

"The medals are great; however, I have always stressed in all my swimmers that challenging themselves to beat their previous best performances is much more important. If you continue to beat your best, the medals will come," he said.

Stewart stressed that off-island meets like the previous weekend in the Land Down Under are important to a developmental standpoint,

*See AUSTRALIA on Page 42*

# Marianas Cup Beach V-ball begins today

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Paul Baxter tries to keep the ball alive in this file photo taken in one of his matches in the AVP Tour.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The 16th Annual Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival, Micronesia's longest-running beach volleyball event, begins today with a full weekend slate of activities at Pacific Islands Club sand courts.

All of the professional players are now on Saipan and already hosted a small group in yesterday's clinic from 3pm to 5pm at PIC.

Another clinic will be held from 3pm to 5pm today also at PIC and Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association president Jon Cramer is inviting everyone to join them in the festivities.

*See MARIANAS CUP on Page 42*